

## ***Acknowledgements***

I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to Dr R.G. Tiedemann, who - as *Doktorvater* and as unrivalled font of knowledge on the subject matter - guided me from the very first steps of the project. Thanks also to Professor Timothy Barrett, who provided patient assistance in filling the numerous lacunae in my understanding of the philosophical and religious life during the Ming and the Qing. I am also indebted to Dr Robert Bickers, for his sharp observations concerning the argumentation and presentation of my work.

This doctoral thesis is based on research carried out at archives in Beijing and Rome. Dr Tiedemann introduced me to academics to whom the Roman archives are a second home: Dr Francesco D'Arelli and the late Professor Bernward Willeke (OFM), in particular, helped me gain access to, and orientate myself within, the archives of the Propaganda Fide. I am equally grateful to Professor Huang Shijian 黄世坚, Professor Qin Baoqi 秦宝琦 and Professor Sha Zhi 沙志, who enabled me to find my way around the academic institutions of the Chinese capital. The same applies to the staff of the First Historical Archives (China Number One Historical Archives), whom I found exceptionally helpful and willing to provide assistance. I appreciate the financial help from the institutions and individuals who supported my research directly through grants and stipends: The Overseas Ministries Study Center (OMSC, New Haven), the University of London, the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of Westminster, the British Library - as well as Dr Inga-Britt Bengtsson for her continuous interest and support. My thanks also for the intellectual stimulation I received from Dr Frank Dikötter, Dr Frances Wood, Dr Joseph Lee 李达和 and Dr

Zhou Xun 周迅, and in particular from my patient companion Yasmine Estaphanos.

The work is dedicated to my parents, Hans and Karin Laamann.

## Part I - Introduction

### Chapter 1: Defining the research parameters

#### 1. Aims and structure

##### *Timeframe and social parameters*

This thesis will focus on manifestations of popular Christianity during the mid-Qing period.<sup>1</sup> It will argue that, following the exclusion of foreign missionaries from China, tendencies towards inculturation accelerated, leading to the creation of a generically *Chinese* expression of Christianity - passed on and preserved by subsequent generations, in strict analogy to other popular Chinese religions.<sup>2</sup> The

---

<sup>1</sup> The term “popular Christianity” requires some preliminary explanation. “Popular” in itself is a multi-faceted expression, which for our purposes may refer to the intellectual cosmos of China’s rural population in the broadest sense. In the current Chinese discourse, the predicates “rural” (*xiangcun* 乡村), “common” (*minjian* 民间) or “of the masses” (*minzhong* 民众) are used almost interchangeably. Another definition, heralded by Daniel L. Overmyer, introduced the nuance of “folk religion”, as opposed to more orthodox expressions of popular religiosity. Following Overmyer’s definition, “folk religions” are characterised by “predominantly lay membership, hierarchical organisation, active proselytisation, regular performance of religious rituals, possession of their own scriptures and texts, and a tendency towards collective security and action.” See D. L. Overmyer, “Alternatives: Popular Religious Sects in Chinese Society”, in: *Modern China* VII-2 (April 1981), p. 154. Christianity during the century of prohibition shared most of these characteristics, but lacked the hierarchical (and the sheer numerical) strength of its Buddhist competitors. However, as Susan Naquin cautioned readers, “popular religions” were usually illegal, ephemeral and active merely on the very fringes of Chinese society - hence constituting the exact opposite of any implied connection with the majority of the population (Susan Naquin, *Shantung Rebellion: The Wang Lun Uprising of 1774*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press 1981, p. xiii). In the absence of any less problematic definitions, Christianity after the Yongzheng edict will be referred to in this thesis as “popular”, simply in contrast to the type of “elite Christianity” which had established itself within the literati class prior to 1724. For a recent discussion relating to “popular Christianity” in this sense during the late imperial period, see Cheng Xiao 程小 and Zhang Ming 张明, “Wanqing xiangshehui de yangjiaoguan: dui jiaogan de yizhong wenhua xinli jieshi 晚清乡社会的信仰观念：对民间信仰的一种文化心理解读” (“The perception of Christianity by village society in late imperial China: Psychological explanations for state action against religious groups”), in *Lishi yanjiu* 历史研究, CCXXXVII-5 (October 1995), pp. 108-116.

<sup>2</sup> In this thesis, the term “Christian” is used for any of the branches and sectarian divisions which have evolved during the course of the religion’s history. As the vast majority of Christian missionaries during

period covered spans the years 1724-1840 and was characterised by a more hostile environment for Chinese Christianity. The anti-missionary edict of 1724 followed more than one century of relative imperial favour, leading to a significant reduction in the number of European missionaries in China - a situation which was to last until the “Unequal Treaties” of the nineteenth century. This century of prohibition has been chosen - and here the thesis differs significantly from earlier research on Chinese Christianity - precisely because of the almost complete absence of Western missionaries. References to missionaries will be used mainly to illustrate the degree to which these were unable to exert significant influence on their flock. Instead, the focus is on the development of indigenous Chinese Christianity, particularly at the non-elite end of social and educational stratification. Since most cases analysed in this thesis deal with uneducated commoners, the condemnatory verdicts of the investigating officials differ markedly - both in language and in argumentation - from

---

the Ming-Qing continuum arrived with papal authorisation, “Christianity” specifically refers to Roman Catholicism in its eighteenth century European expression. During the early Qing period, (Catholic) Christianity was known as the “Teaching of the Lord of Heaven” (*Tianzhujiao* 天主敎), frequently referred to as “Foreign teaching [from the West]” ([*xi* 西] *yangjiao* 洋敎). Equally, in pre-nineteenth century China, the terms “Western” and “foreign” (in the use of *xiyang* 西洋) can be regarded as being synonymous with “European”. The “foreign Christians” of the Chinese documents used for this thesis are hence European Catholics, unless otherwise indicated. The most important exception to this rule - and almost immaterial to the eighteenth century - is the presence of mendicant monks from the Iberian colonies in the Americas. See, for instance, Johannes Beckmann, “China im Blickfeld der jesuitischen Bettelorden des 16. Jahrhunderts”, in: *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft* XIX (1963), pp. 195-214 and XX (1964), pp. 27-41, 89-108.

The generic character for religious “teachings” (*jiao* 敎) is frequently simply rendered into English as “sect”. Barend ter Haar has pointed out that this conventional translation is discriminatory, in as much as it implies a bias against heterodox movements, in favour of established orthodoxy. See B. ter Haar, *The White Lotus Teachings in Chinese Religious History*, Leiden: E. J. Brill 1992, p. 295 ff. For a summary discussion of the terms “sect” and “cult”, see Kenneth Dean, *Lord of the Three in One - The Spread of a Cult in Southeast China*, Princeton / New Jersey: Princeton University Press 1998, pp. 11-14. In accordance with contemporary convention, the literal translation of Christianity as “Teaching of Christ” (*Jidujiao* 耶穌敎) usually refers to Protestant churches only. More recently, however, Chinese historians have begun to reflect œcumenical tendencies by referring to Christianity in its entirety as *Jidujiao*. For an introduction to the current use of *Jidujiao* as a collective term for all expressions of Christianity, see Cao Weian 曹巍安, “Jidujiao zai zhongguo 耶穌敎在中國” (“Christianity in China”), in: *Zhongxue lishi jiaoxue cankao* 中學歷史敎學參考 (“Reference materials for the teaching of history in secondary schools”), 8/1995, pp. 4-7.

anti-Christian refutations aimed at their scholar-official peers.<sup>3</sup> A parallel aim of this thesis is thus to analyse official perceptions of Christianity as a popular religious movement, focusing on the counter-measures of the governing elite as well as on the legal and philosophical justification for their reactions.

### *Structure*

The thesis consists of three parts. The aim of the first part is to define the central theme of “inculturation”, using the historical development of Christianity as the prime example. The concept will then be contrasted with other terms central to the discourse and complemented by providing an overview of the existing literature. At this point, the differences between the approach chosen for this thesis and the methodologies adopted by earlier works on late imperial Christianity will become clear. The introduction will be concluded by a brief overview of Christianity’s history in China, while attempting to draw parallels with other religious ‘imports’ - such as Buddhism. The topic will be taken up again in greater detail in the epilogue, where links between the period under scrutiny and religious developments in present-day China will be explored.

The second part is thematic and will provide concrete examples of Christianity’s inculturation during the eighteenth century. Statements by Chinese Christians as well as by visiting European missionaries will be analysed in order to shed light on the transformation of Christianity in its original missionary expression to a popular Chinese religion. Without attempting to establish any ‘success’ or ‘failure’ of the Christian mission, this part will systematically introduce all relevant

---

<sup>3</sup> Jacques Gernet, *Chine et christianisme - action et réaction*, Paris: Gallimard 1982 can still be regarded as the standard work for the late Ming anti-Christian elite discourse. Gernet’s methodological

components of China's popular culture in order to scrutinise the degree of compatibility between traditional customs and the new Christian morality.

The third part is divided into a chronological survey and into a series of three thematic chapters. The aim of this part is to analyse the relationship between the Chinese state and the Christian communities during the eighteenth century, by scrutinising the legal and philosophical parameters of state action against "heresy" (*xiejiao* 邪教). The survey chapter is intended to provide the historical background for anti-Christian government action, and thus to emphasise the connection between the latter and persecutions against other "heretical" movements. The chronology is complemented by the thematic presentation of concrete archival evidence, illustrating three different modes of perception: The "Christian" as the mysterious unknown, Christian movements as a menace to internal peace and, finally, Christians as collaborators of external intruders.

In the epilogue answers to the crucial questions of this thesis will be sought: Who is the "Chinese Christian" being pursued by Qing officials and modern historians alike? What defines "Christian" identity? And finally - are we confronted with a unique cultural phenomenon or do parallels exist in the historical development of Christianity? Issues raised in the introduction will be revisited on the basis of the examples used in the main body of this thesis.

---

direction ("intellectuals refuting intellectuals") differs substantially from the approach chosen for this thesis.

*“Confessions” - A word of caution*

Most of the Chinese sources used for this research date from a period of renewed anti-heterodox persecution. These investigations into the world of “heresy” are reproduced in memorials (*zou* 奏, *zhe* 摺) to the capital, presenting the ideas of Christian villagers in their own vernacular language. Confessions, however, were extracted under physical and psychological duress, and their contents brought to paper by scribes who had witnessed similar procedures against other sectarian movements.<sup>4</sup> They were thus accustomed to a high degree of normative language in the context of popular religions.<sup>5</sup> In addition to this “normative censoring”, very direct interference by state officials may have played a role. It was therefore highly relevant for the future position of the reporting official - and of the magistrate in whose district the investigations were being carried out - to present an investigation in a positive light.<sup>6</sup> The bureaucrat’s political career was a powerful filter, sheltering the eyes of the political elite from “undesirable” aspects. Thus influenced by coercion and

---

<sup>4</sup> See Blaine Gaustad, “Prophets and Pretenders: Inter-sect Competition in Qianlong China”, in: *Late Imperial China* XXI-1 (June 2000), pp. 1-40.

<sup>5</sup> The same is of course true for the officials themselves who, for lack of better evidence or out of mental lethargy, projected the known parameters of the literati world onto the uncharted depths of the popular mind. These observations largely correspond with the general opinion of J. J. M. de Groot, who believed that “to the Chinese mandarins, ... verisimilitude is always verity, and who preferably believe confessions which confirm their own preconceived suspicions”. See Jan Jacob Maria de Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution in China - A Page in the History of Religions*, Leiden: E. J. Brill and Co. 1901 [Taipei reprint: *Jingwen shuju* 經文書局, 1963], p. 353.

<sup>6</sup> Pursuant to the Confucian principle of *li* 禮, magistrates were advised to seek the assistance of local leaders, such as *baojia* 保甲 heads and village elders, to detect and solve problems in their district. Against the background of a steadily increasing population with a simultaneously stagnating bureaucracy (one official for each 100,000 registered inhabitants in 1749, compared with the same number per 250,000 subjects in 1819), the benefits of this policy seem self-evident. See Kung-Chuan Hsiao 蕭公權, *Rural China - Imperial Control in the Nineteenth Century*, Seattle: University of Washington Press 1960, p. 5. For more information on the working practices of district magistrates, see Huang Liuhong 黃九思 (author) and Djang Chu 張楚 (translator and editor), *A Complete Book Concerning Happiness and Benevolence - Fu-hui ch’üan-shu* 福惠彙編: A Manual for Local Magistrates in Seventeenth-Century China, Tucson: University of Arizona Press 1984, p. 553. Huang Liuhong wrote the manual towards the end of his life in the 1690s [preface dated 1694], having served twice as district magistrate in Shandong and Zhili.

interpretation, this category of official documentation is to be read with caution.<sup>7</sup> Despite such shortcomings, confessions as a type of archival material still provide formidable insight into the world of late imperial Christianity.

A similar degree of caution is due when analysing correspondence held at missionary archives. Letters sent by missionaries positioned in the (initially relatively) safe havens of Beijing and Macau often seemed to depict their spiritual flock in a positive light in order to further their personal objectives: A successful harvest was likely to provide more financial support from Europe. In reality, many of the local Christians were largely unaware of the theological intricacies of their faith, and had not seen a priest in their entire lives. Their self-perception as “Christians” was based on Christianity’s successful inculturation into the matrix of traditional values, such as “filial piety” (*xiao* 孝), which provided a major reason for the survival of Christianity. Letters sent by visiting Europeans therefore tended to conceal the degree of cultural hybridity Christianity had attained by the end of the long century of prohibition.

## **2. The sources**

### *Geography*

This study in principle encompasses the entire territory of the Qing empire. Unless otherwise stated, conclusions arrived at in the context of this thesis should be seen as representative for the whole of China. The availability of archival materials, however, restricted my research mainly to the northern half of Han China, encompassing the North China Plains from Shandong to Shaanxi and the corridor

---

<sup>7</sup> For a brief analysis, see Susan Naquin, “True Confessions: Criminal Interrogations as Sources for Ch’ing History”, in: *National Palace Museum Bulletin*, XI-1 (March/April 1976), pp. 1-17. For a

stretching from northern Zhili to the southern border of Henan (see maps). The concentration of source materials partly reflects the existence of well-established heterodox traditions in the northern provinces and, consequently, the state's preoccupation with popular movements within the northern 'macro-regions'.<sup>8</sup> Heterodox movements thrived with particular fecundity in the border areas of China's provinces, where they could be less easily controlled by the magistrates seated in the provincial and prefectural capitals. Inaccessible or too troublesome to invigilate, these mountains, swamps and forests formed a *cordon sanitaire* against attempts by the state to weed out beliefs which did not pass the test of orthodoxy.<sup>9</sup> Christianity usually also flourished in regions with a tradition of welcoming heterodox movements, and was therefore also a common occurrence in the Chinese north. Popular Christianity was, on the other hand, also a highly mobile phenomenon: Contacts between Christian communities could extend well beyond provincial borders, further accentuated by migrant workers, itinerant professionals and missionaries. Evidence referring to the southern provinces - Sichuan, Fujian and Guangdong in particular - is for this reason often highly relevant to our understanding of Christianity in the northern parts. Though frequently preoccupied with the Christian communities of the hills, fields and marshes, the present study also includes evidence from the capital Beijing. Here, due to the continuing presence of foreign missionaries up to the beginning of the

---

realistic description of incarceration during the mid-Qing, see Derk Bodde, "Prison Life in Eighteenth Century Peking", in: *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, LXXXIX (1969), pp. 311-333.

<sup>8</sup> Skinner's regional theory is outlined in G. William Skinner, "Mobility Strategies in Late Imperial China: A Regional Systems Analysis", in: Carol A. Smith, *Regional Analysis*, New York, San Francisco and London: Academic Press 1976, volume I: *Economic Systems*, pp. 327-364, in particular pp. 331-336.

<sup>9</sup> Mountains, furthermore, were also the traditional *locus* for pilgrimages in China. In addition to being host to spirits and immortals, mountains were often themselves seen as sacred entities worthy of veneration. Hence the saying "Paying respect to the mountain by presenting incense" (*chaoshan jinxiang* 燒山進香). See Susan Naquin and Chü-fang Yü, "Pilgrimage in China", *idem* and Chü-fang Yü (eds), *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites in China*, Berkeley and Oxford: University of California Press 1992, p. 11 ff.



nineteenth century, tendencies favouring inculturation were less pronounced than in the villages. The sources used for the study of the Beijing community are nevertheless of interest because they stress the continuing links which existed between the capital parishes and the rural diaspora.<sup>10</sup>

### **Map of late imperial China's 'macroregions'**

[G. W. Skinner, "Mobility Strategies in Late Imperial China: A Regional Systems Analysis", in: Carol A. Smith, *Regional Analysis*, New York, San Francisco and London: Academic Press 1976, volume 1: *Economic Systems*, page 332]

---

<sup>10</sup> The term "diaspora" is appropriate for the (late) eighteenth century, since many of the Christian populations in the countryside can be regarded as scattered refugees from urban convert communities. This fact notwithstanding, the countryside also had a significant - and frequently under-represented - role to play during proselytisation prior to 1724. See Johannes Beckmann, "China im Blickfeld der jesuitischen Bettelorden", p. 195 ff.

## Map of the provincial divisions of the Qing empire (circa 1820)

[Tan Qixiang 谭其骧 (ed.), *Zhongguo lishi dituji* 中国历史地图集  
("Historical atlas of China"), Beijing: *Ditu chubanshe* 地图出版社 1987,  
volume VIII, pp. 3-4.]

## **The Qing empire and Asia during the 18th century**

[Albert Herrmann, *Historical and Commercial Atlas of China*, Cambridge / Massachusetts: Harvard University Press 1935, pp. 58-59.]

### *The Archives*

Most of the archival evidence originates from two sources: Western missionary correspondence, mainly kept at Roman archives, and Chinese official documents from the former imperial archives in Beijing - mostly never used for academic publications in China or in the West. These manuscripts are complemented by printed reproductions of similar archival sources: Collections of memorials and imperial commentaries, the “veritable records” (*shilu* 實錄) of the Qing reign periods, published sources from the Ba-xian archives in Sichuan, and other relevant reproductions of documents held at the former imperial archives. Collections of European missionary correspondence form the counterpart to these official Chinese materials. Usually compiled by the orders which despatched the missionaries throughout the centuries, compilations such as the *Sinica Franciscana* or the printed correspondence of the Jesuit and Lazarist orders provided indispensable support for this study.

The *Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide* was established in 1622 by Pope Gregory XV as the nerve centre for the Catholic world mission, with the aim of forming a logistical counterbalance to the colonial powers of Catholic Europe. Although its purpose was to co-ordinate the activities of all Catholic priests in the world, the letters sent to the *Propaganda* often reflect the political struggles between the Roman missionaries and those protected by the diplomatic tutelage (*padroado*) of the kings of Spain and Portugal - and later also France.<sup>11</sup> These letters form the core of the *Archivum de Propaganda Fide* (henceforth: APF). The sections used for my own

---

<sup>11</sup> The complications arising out of the diplomatic tensions between the Vatican and the Catholic empires are illustrated in Georges Mensaert, “L’Établissement de la hiérarchie catholique en Chine, de 1684 à 1721”, in: *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* XLVI (1953), pp. 1-48. See also Fortunato Margiotti, *Il cattolicesimo nello Shansi dalle origini al 1738*, Rome: Edizioni “Sinica Franciscana” 1958, p. 60, concerning the very first instructions pursuant to the east Asian missions.

archival work come from the sections *Acta Congregationis Particularis super rebus sinarum et indiarum orientalium*, *Scritture Originali della Congregazione Particolare dell' Indie e Cina* and *Scritture riferite nei Congressi*.<sup>12</sup>

The imperial Chinese archives have an equally eventful history. Renamed after 1949 the “China Number One Historical Archives” 中国第一历史档案馆 (henceforth abbreviated as “First Historical Archives” or FHA), the archives contain an abundance of official documents referring to government affairs throughout the late Ming and early Qing periods. Most sources used for this thesis consist of petitions and memorials directed to the attention of the Yongzheng 雍正 (1723-1736), Qianlong 乾隆 (1736-1796) and Jiaqing 嘉庆 (1796-1821) emperors, located in the Grand State Council Records for Palace Memorials 大清高宗纯皇帝实录. <sup>13</sup> The petitions and memorials originate from provincial governors, district magistrates and - most importantly - visiting officials from the central administration.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> For a complete overview see Nicholas Kowalski and Josef Metzler, *Inventario dell'archivio storico della Sacra Congregazione per l'Evangelizzazione dei Popoli o 'De Propaganda Fide'* (English parallel title: *Inventary of the Historical Archives of the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples or 'De Propaganda Fide'*, Rome 1983.

<sup>13</sup> The Grand Council (*junjichu* 军机处), also referred to as (Grand) State Council, was established in 1723 by the Yongzheng emperor as the military counterpart to the secretarial institution of the Southern Library (*nanshufang* 南书房). The institution quickly increased in scope and importance, and the Councillors were often selected directly from among the officials of the Grand Secretariat (*neige* 内閣), the original “central government”. See Feng Erkang 冯尔康, *Yongzheng zhuan* 雍正传 (“The Yongzheng emperor”), Beijing: *Renmin chubanshe* 人民出版社 1993, pp. 243-293. For a concise introduction to the institutions of the Qing government, see Ch'ien Mu 钱穆 (Chün-tu Hsüeh and George O. Totten, translators), *Traditional Government in Imperial China - A Critical Analysis*, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press and New York: St Martin's Press 1982, pp. 126-133. See also Beatrice S. Bartlett, *Monarchs and Ministers: The Grand Council in Mid-Ch'ing China*, Berkeley and Oxford: University of California Press 1991. Susan Naquin, “True Confessions”, p. 6 gives a brief summary on the role and mechanisms of memorials.

<sup>14</sup> The Grand State Council Records are currently subdivided into the categories *Intrusion of Imperialism* 帝国主义入侵中国 and *Peasant Movements* 农民运动. For a fuller picture of the archives, see *Zhongguo diyi lishi dang'anguan* (First Historical Archives) (eds), *Zhongguo diyi lishi dang'anguan guancang dang'an gaishu* 中国第一历史档案馆馆藏档案概要 (“A summary of the collections of the First Historical Archives”), Beijing: *Dang'an*

### 3. From “missiology” to “popular religion” - A survey of relevant research

#### a) A mission for a European audience

The pursuit of “Sinology” in the West can be traced to the attempts of the first Jesuit missionaries to understand the philosophical and historical context of their missionary enterprise in China.<sup>15</sup> The history of Chinese Christianity is hence inextricably linked to the first descriptions Chinese civilisation composed for a Western audience. The correspondence between the missionaries and the representatives of Europe’s elite helped shape the idealised vision of China as an enlightened Philosophers’ Kingdom: While intellectuals and political liberals struggled to inculcate “scientific” values into the minds of the European aristocracy, the precepts of Confucian rationalism - as interpreted and conveyed by the missionaries at the imperial court in Beijing - presented themselves as a utopian solution to European problems. The regular correspondence between the early Jesuits and eminent figures of the European enlightenment, such as Voltaire, Leibniz and the royalties of England, France and Prussia, were first collected in the *Lettres Édifiantes et curieuses*.<sup>16</sup> The anti-missionary decree of 1724 put an effective end to the first period of missionary activity in China, confining the remaining representatives of Catholicism to the city limits of the capital and to Macau. While the court missionaries were far from inactive (tacitly nurturing links with Christian

---

*chubanshe* 出版所 1985. Readers are reminded that the FHA sources used in this thesis are always quoted starting with the catalogue scroll (*juan* 卷) number, the original document reference number, and the individual document sub-number. The frame number refers to the reel-position (“page”) of microfilmed documents - in this case all cited documents. With the help of the frame number it should be possible to identify the precise location of the passages quoted in this thesis.

<sup>15</sup> An interesting synopsis of European sinology, based on a colloquium in Taipei in 1992, was recently published in London. See John Cayley and Ming Wilson (eds.), *Europe Studies China - Papers from an International Conference on the History of European Sinology*, London: Hanshantang 1995.

<sup>16</sup> Charles Le Gobien (ed.), *Lettres Édifiantes et curieuses de la Chine Écrites par des missionnaires jésuites*, Paris 1707 (and subsequent editions). The eighteenth century correspondence by Jesuit and Lazarist missionaries has recently been republished as Charles Le Gobien et al. (eds), *Lettres Édifiantes et curieuses de Chine par des missionnaires jésuites 1702-1776*, Paris: Garnier-Flammarion 1979. See

communities, compiling dictionaries and translating elements of occidental knowledge into eloquent Chinese), the flow of information from the mystical lands of the East became increasingly tenuous. When the new heralds of Christianity arrived a century later in the wake of the opium wars, the picture presenting itself to the European (and by now global) audience stood in sharp contrast to the utopian images conveyed by the Jesuits: Whereas the West was being catapulted into a bright future of science and industry, China remained deeply entrenched in mediaeval squalor. The propagation of Western civilisation - in conjunction with the Christian values perceived as its very foundation - would soon be seen as Europe's new moral mission to China.<sup>17</sup>

By the middle of the nineteenth century, most missionaries were publishing historical accounts of their own respective pastures, ranging from isolated communities to entire provinces. In methodological terms, the emphasis was clearly on the collation of information relevant to the specific missionary area: Statistical data referring to conversions and baptisms, weddings and funerals were intended to present the mission as a successful enterprise, while missionary confrères (usually belonging to the same order) were presented in almost hagiographic manner.<sup>18</sup> In stark contrast

---

also Renée Simon (ed.), *Le P. Antoine Gaubil, S.J.: Correspondence de Pékin 1722-1759*, Geneva: Droz 1970.

<sup>17</sup> This affected, needless to say, the perception of Chinese religions in the West. The negative image of "rural superstition" propagated by the Qing state exacerbated the negative angle taken by Western research into popular cults well into the twentieth century. More information can be gleaned from N. J. Girardot, "Chinese Religion and Western Scholarship", in: James Whitehead, Yu-Ming Shaw and N.J. Girardot (eds), *China and Christianity - Historical and Future Encounters*, Notre Dame / Indiana: Notre Dame University Press 1979, p. 83 ff. The principal exception to this rule is de Groot - an unequivocal advocate of the Christian missions in China - who also sympathised with other religious movements in their struggle against suppression by the state. See J. J. M. de Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution*, (passim).

<sup>18</sup> A typical example of this category is the "heroic" history of the Jesuits at the imperial court by Fernando Bortone (himself SJ): *I Gesuiti alla Corte di Pechino - due secoli e mezzo di eroismo per la diffusione della fede cattolica in Cina ... 1552-1813*, Rome: Desclée and C. / Ed. Pontifici 1969. C.W. Allan, *Jesuits at the Court of Peking*, Hong Kong, Shanghai and Singapore: Kelly and Walsh 1935 provides a survey history of the period up to the early Qianlong period. A useful reference tool for the names and writings of Jesuit missionaries during the first period of their presence in China is Joseph Dehergne, *Répertoire des Jésuites de Chine de 1552 à 1800*, Rome and Paris: Bibliotheca Instituti Historici Societatis Iesu 1973.

to the missionaries' predilection for publishing accounts of persecutions and martyrdom among the Chinese believers, local Christianity was generally relegated to a position of lesser relevance. If this in retrospect seems startling, the relative neglect of Chinese Christianity in the missiological accounts of the nineteenth century becomes less enigmatic when the often strained relationship between Western missionaries and leading representatives of the Chinese communities is taken into account.

The Catholic debate as to whether or not to ordain Chinese priests was long and tortuous, centring on their perceived ability to grasp the depths of Christian theology and to master the all-important Latin. The cultural discrepancies were certainly considerable, and were further complicated by the latent racism and cultural incompatibilities of the Europeans involved in the China mission.<sup>19</sup> Despite pleas from important members of the Roman hierarchy, most missionaries were not ready, not even by the end of the eighteenth century, to accept their Chinese confrères as full equals. On the contrary, many Europeans expressed serious objections, stating that those who “had familiarised themselves over a long period of time with the minds and character of the Chinese missionaries, generally regarded these as being incapable of administering a big diocese”.<sup>20</sup> A letter by the attaché of the Archbishop of Goa from the year 1806 reveals similar sources of tension between the European representatives

---

<sup>19</sup> Expressed through comments such as “.... *superbia, tanto commune nei Cinesi*”. See the letter by E. D. di San Goldino to Rome from Macau, October 1806, kept at the APF as document SC, series III, *Cina e Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, ff. 195-196. Much of the eighteenth-century missionary correspondence remarking on the eligibility - and desirability - of Chinese Christians as priests would in more modern times have been classified as ‘racist’. Their religious fervour, according to contemporary European commentaries, stood in contrast to the perceived lack in doctrinal reliability. A typical example is the debate on “*prêtres indigènes non-latins*” reproduced in Léonide Guiot, *La Mission du Su-tchuen au XVIII<sup>me</sup> siècle*, pp. 127-128 and 290-291.

<sup>20</sup> The issue was raised by Cardinal Borgia, who attempted to alter the Vatican's policy on the issue. The document in the original: .... *i quali per lunga esperienza conoscono il genio, e carattere di questi sacerdoti cinesi, rispetati generalmente incapaci al buon governo di una vasta Diocesi*. See his letter to the Propaganda sent in 1787, APF document SOCP, *Indie Orientali*, 1817, folium 13.



of the church and the Chinese missionaries. The Chinese are described by the attaché as being prone to bickering among each other, overly interested in money matters and generally regarded as being “arrogant”. The correspondence between Philip Huang and the Chinese students of the College in Naples further highlights attitudes reflecting the mistrust towards the Chinese clerics.<sup>21</sup> It is even doubtful whether those European clerics who publicly backed the appointment of Chinese priests to important offices would have been prepared to cede the invigilation of doctrinal affairs to local priests.<sup>22</sup> Chinese Christians, in particular when given the opportunity to visit Europe, were finally also not immune from “culture shock”, and developed at times remarkably erratic forms of behaviour.<sup>23</sup>

Many (Catholic) missionaries during the middle of the nineteenth century were far removed from the stereotype of heroic martyrs, but chose a foreign posting because of the material benefits a “dangerous” mission field unfailingly yielded upon retirement. Such missionaries were unlikely to enter a time-consuming discourse with their new parishioners, and concentrated on reporting statistical data reflecting the

---

<sup>21</sup> See Giacomo di Fiore, *Lettere di Missionari dalla Cina (1761-1775) - La vita quotidiana nelle missioni attraverso il carteggio di Emiliano Palladini e Filippo Huang con il Collegio dei Cinesi in Napoli*, Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale 1995. References to anti-Chinese sentiments - and very concrete forms of discrimination - can be found throughout this compilation of missionary correspondence, for instance on p. 95.

<sup>22</sup> To a certain degree, even the Catholic church after the Second Vatican Council can be seen as being loath to let the local churches take control over the interpretation of theological issues. One of the chief guardians of religious orthodoxy within the Roman church, Cardinal Ratzinger, recently stressed that the world mission should develop within the same parameters as evolved in the West. See the article by Fiona Bowie, entitled “The Inculturation Debate in Africa”, in *Studies in World Christianity*, V-1 (1999), pp. 66-92 (referring to A. Shorter, *Towards a Theory of Inculturation*, London: Geoffrey Chapman 1988, p. 237).

<sup>23</sup> This certainly applied to Philip Huang’s unpredictable and often offensive demeanour, and eventually also his proverbial tendency of reinventing the true course of events - *filippade*, in the terminology of his opponents. See Giacomo di Fiore, “Emiliano Palladini e i missionari del Collegio dei Cinesi”, in: F. D’Arelli and A. Tamburello (eds.), *La Missione Cattolica in Cina tra i secoli XVII-XVIII - Emiliano Palladini 1733 - 1793*, *Congregatio della Sacra Famiglia di Gesù Cristo, Procuratore della Sacra Famiglia de Propaganda Fide a Macao*, Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale 1995, p. 268. Sources describing similar patterns of behaviour relating to John Hu’s sojourn in France are analysed in Jonathan Spence, *The Question of Hu*, London: Faber 1988, pp. 70-105.

success of their personal mission.<sup>24</sup> This type of literature was both Euro-centric and Mission-centred, and came to dominate the second era of western missionary activity in China. Accounts from individual missions fill entire libraries, produced by both Catholic and Protestant missionaries.<sup>25</sup> But the most comprehensive accounts of the state of Christianity during the Opium War period are perhaps the recollections of the Abbé Huc (1813-1860),<sup>26</sup> as well as the *History of Christian Missions in China* by K. S. Latourette.<sup>27</sup> Whereas Huc placed much emphasis on the obstacles (French) Catholic missionaries faced despite the recently concluded Treaty of Nanjing (1842), Latourette, writing in the early Republican period, had a different historical vantage point: The excesses against converts and missionaries belonged to the history books, whereas the missions of the Nanjing decade had to justify both their existence in general and their presence in China against a strident ideological opposition.<sup>28</sup>

An extraordinary representative of “missiology” is Jan Jakob Maria de Groot’s *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution in China - A Page in the History of Religions*,

---

<sup>24</sup> While Protestant missionaries were frequently religious firebrands, passionate about their beliefs and sincere in their interest in the Chinese people they sought to convert, their vision was often as much biased as that of their Catholic competitors - with major exceptions, such as Robert Morrison (1782-1834) and Karl Friedrich Gützlaff (1803-1851). Cf. Herman Schlyter, *Der Chinamissionar Karl Gützlaff und seine Heimatbasis*, Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup 1976, pp. 15-19. Gützlaff’s determination is reflected in his attempt to convert the Buddhist monks of Putuo, during the 1830s. See Chü-fang Yü, “P’u-t’o Shan: Pilgrimage and the Creation of the Chinese Potalaka”, in: S. Naquin and C.-f. Yü (eds), *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites*, p. 242, note 30.

<sup>25</sup> The occasion of the centennial anniversary of Robert Morrison’s missionary activity produced a number of retrospective publications, mainly focusing on the Protestant missions. See, for instance, D. MacGillivray (ed.), *A Century of Protestant Missions in China (1807-1907): Being the Centenary Conference Historical Volume*, Shanghai: American Presbyterian Mission Press 1907.

<sup>26</sup> Evarist-Régis Huc, *Souvenirs d’un voyage dans la Tartarie, le Thibet et la Chine pendant les années 1844, 1845 et 1846*, Beijing: Imprimerie des Lazaristes 1924. Huc’s report was reprinted and translated several times. For this thesis the English version *Souvenirs of a Journey through Tartary, Tibet and China During the Years 1844, 1845 and 1846*, published in Beijing by the Imprimerie des Lazaristes in 1931 was used. A more specific publication is his *Le christianisme en Chine, en Tartarie et au Thibet*, Paris: Gaume Frères 1857-58.

<sup>27</sup> Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christian Missions in China*, London: Society for the Promotion of Christianity / New York: Macmillan 1929. Latourette’s account of the China mission was followed by a momentous publication in seven volumes, entitled *A History of the Expansion of Christianity*, New York: Harper and Brothers 1937-45.

dedicated “to all missionaries of every Christian creed labouring in China”.<sup>29</sup> De Groot’s monograph made such extensive and detailed use of the relevant primary source materials available at the turn of the nineteenth century that it becomes in itself a highly suitable source for research. The author’s most important thesis is that the phenomenon of sectarian proliferation during the latter half of the Qing can be seen as a consequence of the state’s determination to wipe out “heresy”, a policy which created a situation which the dynasty could eventually no longer control.<sup>30</sup> De Groot saw the state officials’ obsession with orthodoxy as being aimed at eradicating the very existence of unsanctioned popular religious systems. For the first time in missiological discourse, Christianity was specifically included among the other, “heathen” victims of the state’s anti-heretical zeal: The slaughter of Eight Trigrams followers in Zhili is illustrated in pitiful congruence with the execution of Christian missionaries in Fu’an.<sup>31</sup> In an attempt to explain why the late Chinese empire proved so reluctant to protect the missions from the hostile mob, De Groot presented his interpretation in unequivocal terms: [The Chinese state being] “the most intolerant, the most persecuting of all earthly governments ... must *a fortiori* be hostile to Christianity and the despised ‘foreign devils’ who introduced it.”<sup>32</sup> His observations, however, also bear the marks of their time. The “fanatic, bloody and cruel” Chinese state is contrasted with a “civilised” European world order.<sup>33</sup> Secondly, and despite the author’s repeated affirmations of writing for all persecuted religious movements,

---

<sup>28</sup> The period of the Self-Strengthening movement is analysed in Paul A. Cohen, *China and Christianity: The Missionary Movement and the Growth of Chinese Antiforeignism 1860-1870*, Cambridge/Massachusetts: Harvard University Press 1963.

<sup>29</sup> See J. J. M. de Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution in China*, frontispiece.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 521-525 (commenting on the Taiping uprising), and p. 565 (reemphasising the link between state persecution and Chinese Christianity).

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 473-474 and 285-286, respectively.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 3.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 263, for instance, but evident from passages throughout the œuvre.

there is a clear missionary bias, favouring sects opposing “idolatry”, which the author regarded as being more prone for conversion to Christianity.<sup>34</sup> The “missiological” nature of *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution* is also obvious in as much as all chosen sources bar one exemplify the experience of Western missionaries. An investigation into the existence of an indigenous, popular expression of Christianity thus had to wait until further archival evidence would become available.<sup>35</sup>

Despite de Groot’s contribution, most twentieth-century authors continued to regard the entire century in between the Yongzheng edict and the treaties of the mid-nineteenth century as a period of shameful loss.<sup>36</sup> The nineteenth century tradition of missiological writing - emphasising the achievements of the Western missions, while placing the agency of Chinese Christianity firmly into the hands of the foreign missionaries rather than indigenous believers - created a mould which few historians of Chinese Christianity dared to alter. For as long as the vast majority of authors consisted of clerics from the West, any change had to emanate from the Western churches themselves. A rather astonishing fact is that the missiological tradition of accounting for the development of Chinese Christianity was copied by Chinese historians until the end of the twentieth century. In part, this may be due to the Western educational background (missionary schools and Christian universities) of eminent Christian historians, such as Chen Yuan 陳元 (1880-1971) or Fang Hao

---

<sup>34</sup> In particular referring to *Xiantian* Buddhism. See *ibidem*, pp. 195-196.

<sup>35</sup> In de Groot’s own words: “Very little seems to have been written about this episode in the persecution of Christianity. Even Huc is silent on this point. .... More particulars may have been published somewhere, but we have not found them.” See *ibidem*, p. 290. “Episode” refers to the fate of China’s Christians around the middle of the eighteenth century.

<sup>36</sup> “Dark years”, in a frequently employed term used by historians of the (Catholic) China mission. See Columba Cary-Elwes, *China and the Cross: Studies in Mission History*, London: Longmans, Green and Co. 1957, pp. 179-181.

With reports of the atrocities of the First World War reaching China - and more directly colonised regions - the European claim to moral superiority lost its lustre. The churches, and in particular the foreign missionaries, were under increasing pressure to interact with populations who felt in no way “inferior” to their colonial masters.<sup>39</sup> Earlier models of clerical self-administration were used by Chinese

<sup>39</sup> The International Missionary Council in Jerusalem (1928) reflected this change. The conference concluded that the missions should serve - and be under the leadership of - the indigenous populations. See Ling Oi Ki, *The Changing Role of the British Protestant Missionaries in China, 1945-1952*, Madison/New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press and London: Associated University Press 1999, pp. 39-40.

Christians in order to encourage the growth of their missions.<sup>40</sup> Following the end of the Second World War, the creation of a new international situation and the rapid disintegration of the colonial world order, the Euro-centrism of the nineteenth century underwent its final transformation.<sup>41</sup> Other religious (Islam, Hinduism) and philosophical (Communism) concepts presented themselves as powerful alternatives to the message of the Christian foreigners. This, perhaps, became nowhere more obvious than in China, which was emerging from decades of internal warfare and influence by foreign powers.<sup>42</sup> The missionaries who had established themselves from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards now saw themselves challenged by secular ideologies, draining support for the Christian missions and mobilising opinion against the large-scale presence of foreigners *per se*.<sup>43</sup> The Christian churches had to

---

<sup>40</sup> This refers in particular to the Presbyterian experience during the nineteenth century. See C. P. William, *The Ideal of the Self-Governing Church - A Study of Victorian Missionary Strategy*, Leiden, Boston and Cologne: E. J. Brill 1990.

<sup>41</sup> The first Chinese Christian to act as the General Secretary of China's YMCA was Wang Zhengting (C. T. Wang), elected in 1915. By 1920, some thirty percent of its members were Chinese nationals. The National Christian Council meeting in 1922 gave itself the authority to "advise" all missionary societies operating in China, with the aim of promoting an interdenominational and indigenising approach. See Lian Xi, *The Conversion of Missionaries: Liberalism in American Protestant Missions in China, 1907-1932*, Pennsylvania Park: Pennsylvania State University Press 1997, p. 158. A final turning point for the China missions was reached with the Motte Conference (Shanghai, 1926), which declared indigenisation as the key to a successful future of the churches in China. See Ling Oi Ki, *The Changing Role of the British Protestant Missionaries*, pp. 39-40.

<sup>42</sup> The relationship between the missions and China's intellectuals during the second half of the nineteenth century was often contradictory. In the immediate aftermath of the Taiping wars, the literati of the Jiangnan launched a "kulturkampf" against the missionaries, as part of a wider campaign against heterodox cults. See Leslie Ronald Marchant, *British Protestant Christian Evangelists and the 1898 Reform Movement in China*, Nedlands: University of Western Australia / Centre for Asian Studies 1975, p. 13. Earlier attempts to appeal to the scholar-official elite having failed, the missionaries concentrated on the poor. See Gael Graham, *Gender, Culture and Christianity: American Protestant Mission Schools in China, 1880-1930*, New York: P. Lang 1995, pp. 10-11. At the same time, many intellectuals who interpreted the perceived strength of the West as a consequence of its religio-cultural background viewed Christianity, especially in its contemporary Anglo-American form ("Protestant work ethic") as a way out of China's national predicament. Although the total number of converts remained negligible, some twenty-five percent of delegates in the Provisional National Assembly were Christian converts. See Yu-Ming Shaw, *An American Missionary in China: John Leighton Stuart and Chinese-American Relations*, Cambridge/Massachusetts: Council on East Asian Studies (Harvard University) and Harvard University Press 1992, pp. 30-31.

<sup>43</sup> Mainly in central and southern China - the anti-missionary environment of the 1920s is analysed in Jessie Gregory Lutz, *Chinese Politics and Christian Missions: The anti-Christian Movements of 1920-28*, Notre Dame/Indiana: Cross Cultural Publications 1988 and in Yip Ka-che, *The Anti-Christian*

act quickly. In particular the Protestant churches, historically the product of a vernacularisation of Catholicism, now accepted the imperative of 'indigenisation'.<sup>44</sup> Many missionaries went beyond theology, by advocating the implementation of a "social gospel" in response to the radical changes in world politics after 1918.<sup>45</sup>

For the Roman Catholic church, a longer history, and the collective memory of the Rites Controversy meant that change was less imminent.<sup>46</sup> The long process of redefining the role of its mission began among Catholics in the former French, Spanish and Portuguese colonies and culminated in 1968 with the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council. But while the majority of believers lived in the developing world, the Church in its structures and liturgy was still very much a European creation. By accepting the equal value of (most) rites antedating the introduction of Christianity in the indigenous cultures, the Catholic church attempted to reverse the flow towards secular alternatives in the developing world, in particular towards

---

*Movements of 1920-27: With Special Reference to the Experience of Protestant Missions*, New York: Columbia University 1970.

<sup>44</sup> The body of literature dealing with the missions during the republican period deserves more space than can be allocated in this study. For a summary of recent publications on the topic, see Jessie G. Lutz, "Chinese Christianity and China Missions: Works Published since 1970", in: *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, XX-3 (1996), pp. 98-106. The republican period is illustrated - in survey form - in Jean Charbonnier, *Histoire des Chrétiens de Chine*, Paris: Desclée 1992, pp. 281-314.

<sup>45</sup> Not all missionaries embraced the notion of indigenisation wholeheartedly. Andrew Walls observed that the Presbyterian missionaries from Edinburgh expected their missionaries to interact with the converts as if they had been at home in Scotland, and without any greater knowledge of the local cultures. See Andrew Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History - Studies in the Transmission of Faith*, Maryknoll/New York: Orbis Books 1996 (preface). This is confirmed in Lian Xi, *The Conversion of Missionaries*, pp. 156-158. As late as in the 1950s, the eminent missionary Kenneth Scott Latourette cautioned against an unreflected drive towards indigenisation. See K. S. Latourette, "The Light of History on Current Missionary Methods", in: *International Review of Missions*, XLII-4 (1953), pp. 138-143, cited in Ling Oi Ki, *The Changing Role of the British Protestant Missionaries*, p. 208.

For more details on the concept of the Social Gospel, see Cui Dan, *The Cultural Contribution of British Protestant Missionaries and British-American Cooperation to China's National Development during the 1920s*, Lanham: University of America Press 1998, pp. 7-23. Reformist tendencies within the early twentieth century missions - and the hostile reaction of secular Westernising intellectuals - are also analysed in Lian Xi, *The Conversion of Missionaries*, pp. 151-156.

<sup>46</sup> Embarrassment at the historic decision to ban the traditional ancestor rites - as well as a certain reluctance to open all relevant archives - was evident during the debate preceding the rescinding of the ban. See François Bontinck, *La lutte autour de la liturgie chinoise aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles*, Louvain and Paris: Université Lovanium de Léopoldville 1962, pp. vii-ix.

ideologies of socialist origin. A much belated reaction by the Vatican to the changing international and intellectual landscape was to lift the restrictions on ancestral worship during the 1940s<sup>47</sup> - never mind that by this time socialist agit-prop educators had already started to establish a foothold in the countryside, urging the rural population to abjure from any expression of “superstition”.<sup>48</sup> The greater autonomy of the Chinese clergy gained in this context was stymied when the CCP gained control over mainland China in 1949, resulting in an exodus of leading Christian intellectuals and clerics alike. For the first time since the 1840s, foreign missionaries were prohibited from proselytising in mainland China.

The last vestiges of Jiang Jieshi’s Republic, situated on the island of Taiwan, provided a rallying point for foreign missionaries intent on continuing their mission among the Chinese. Encouraged by the success of the Christian missions in other parts of East Asia - Japan and Korea in particular - the number of Taiwanese converts increased dramatically.<sup>49</sup> The R.o.C. government was particularly keen on welcoming

---

<sup>47</sup> The process of lifting the centuries-old ban on ancestral worship culminated on 8 December 1939 in an edict by the Congregation of the Propaganda Fide. The measure, propagated by Pius XII, could only be gradually communicated to the Catholic communities in China due to war. See C. Cary-Elwes, *China and the Cross*, pp. 244-245.

<sup>48</sup> In general, the policies of the Nationalist *Guomindang* 國民政府 (GMD) concerning the eradication of “superstition” differed very little from the Communist competitors. In particular in between May 1919 and 1927, both parties were strongly influenced by Soviet Russian advisers, who helped the GMD-CCP alliance channel popular anti-Christian and xenophobic sentiments into “anti-imperialist” agitation. See Yip Ka-che, *The Anti-Christian Movement in China*, pp. 113, 174-179 and 261. Anti-missionary periodicals and cultural-political organisations - such as the “Great Alliance against Cultural Aggression” *Fan-wenhuaqinlüe datongmeng* 反文化侵略大同盟 - were frequently jointly operated by supporters of both parties. See Jessie Gregory Lutz, *Chinese Politics and Christian Missions*, pp. 216-218.

Also akin to the CCP, local Nationalist officials were at times openly hostile to foreign missionaries attempting to speak up for non-Han communities in ethnically mixed areas. See T’ien Ju-k’ang, *Peaks of Faith: Protestant Mission in Revolutionary China*, Leiden: E. J. Brill 1993, pp. 53, 64 and 109. The uncompromising attitude of the GMD towards ethnic minorities - and the tendency of the latter to seek missionary protection - remained in place well into final decades of the twentieth century. See Ralph R. Covell, *Pentecost on the Hills in Taiwan: The Christian Faith among the Original Inhabitants*, Pasadena / California: Hope Publishing House 1998, p. 290 as well as his earlier work *The Liberating Gospel in China: The Christian Faith among China’s Minority Peoples*, Grand Rapids / Michigan: Baker Books 1995.

<sup>49</sup> See R. R. Covell, *Pentecost of the Hills in Taiwan*, pp. 184-208 and p. 243 ff. - with particular reference to American missionary work among the minority populations of Taiwan. A rather negative



missionaries after 1949, since a majority represented evangelical movements in the United States, Taiwan's staunchest ally in its fight against Communism. Most missionaries propagated Christianity in the only version they were familiar with, i.e. in its unadulterated Western - more precisely: North American - expression. Works published by Chinese Christians during the second half of the century reflect their strong reliance on Western churches, the majority being "missiological" accounts of Chinese Christianity and translations of foreign religious writings.<sup>50</sup> The 1980s saw an intensification of tendencies towards "indigenous" (*bentu* 本土地- literally "from our own soil" or *bense* 本性格 "of original character") forms of the Christian religion. Perhaps in analogy to the political soul-searching for an independent national identity, Taiwanese Christians strove to create a public discourse on the changing nature of their belief.<sup>51</sup>

The abundance of literature produced in Taiwan, and also in the territories of Hong Kong and Macau, stands in stark contrast to the situation in mainland China. Following the nationalisation of all major publishing houses after 1949, the few publications on Christianity that did emerge from the printing presses had to conform to the government's policies on religion. True to its ideological foundations of

---

characterisation of the GMD can be found in Paul A. Varg, *Missionaries, Chinese and Diplomats: The American Protestant Missionary Movement, 1890-1952*, Princeton: Princeton University Press 1958, pp. 287-288 and 292-298.

<sup>50</sup> A count of publications on Christianity since 1949, based on the (R.o.C.) National Library compilation of books printed in Taiwan (cf. any issue the "Bulletin of the National Central Library (Taipei) *Guoli zhongyang tushuguan guankan* 國立中央圖書館館刊), reveals the extent of borrowing from Western sources: hundreds of titles European or North American names are quoted as the original authors, not counting tracts directly produced and distributed by foreign missionaries.

<sup>51</sup> Most relevantly in a series of academic colloquia, which began in 1988 at Tamkang [Danjiang 淡江] University. The first academic results are presented in Lin Zhiping 林智平, *Jidujiao yu zhongguo bensehua lunwenji* 基督教與中國本土化論文輯 ("Christianity and Chinese inculturation: selected articles"), Taipei: *Yuzhouguang chubanshe* 九州光出版社 1990. These tendencies are the topic of Lam Wing-hung, *Chinese Theology in Construction*, Pasadena/California: William Carey Library 1983.

dialectic materialism,<sup>52</sup> the CCP also continued two thousand years of Confucian state propaganda against “superstitious practices”.<sup>53</sup> The majority of Christians in “Red China” accepted the new ideological conditions by bowing to the principle of the “Three Self”, pledging to sever all links with foreign political and clerical institutions.<sup>54</sup> One of the unintended side-effects of this policy for China’s official Catholic church was that the reform movement within Roman Catholicism passed China by. This refers in particular to the Second Vatican Council, which implemented new principles of liturgical vernacularisation and indigenisation. For Chinese historians the restrictive policy had two consequences: The Christian enterprise in Chinese history was, firstly, interpreted as a mere by-product of Western imperialist intrusion. As a precondition for publication, any descriptions of missionary history thus had to reflect the official condemnation of Western imperialism.<sup>55</sup> Publications on Christianity, as well as on all other phenomena of religious nature, were secondly subject to a strict vetting process which disqualified any expressions of religious devotion as “un-scientific”, and hence as non-compatible with the enlightened policies

---

<sup>52</sup> Developed in the nineteenth century by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, as an atheist alternative to Hegelianism. Marxian views on religion and its role in the state are outlined in Friedrich Engels (translated by Alec West), *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, New York: International Publishers 1972.

<sup>53</sup> Atheism is known to the Chinese as the “Teaching of the Non-Existence of Spirits” (*wushen jiao* 无神教). The classics, in particular the *Xunzi* 荀子 and *Hanfeizi* 韩非子, contain many references to simple-minded farming folk afraid of their own shadows. For a detailed introduction, see Ya Hanzhang 阚 江章 and Wang Yousan 王 有山 (eds.), *Zhongguo wushenlun shi* 中国无神论史 (“History of atheism in China”), Beijing: *Zhongguo shehuikexueyuan chubanshe* 中国社会科学出版社 (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Press) 1992, in particular pp. 732-751 for a general introduction to the Qing period. The anthology contains essays by well-known philosophers, but does not take into account “contradictions” in other texts not represented in this publication. Atheism is also one of the ideological pillars of the Chinese Communist Party. On Li Dazhao’s and Chen Duxiu’s belief in “scientific materialism”, see *ibidem*, pp. 1004-1047.

<sup>54</sup> The “Three Self” policies are: Self-Governing, Self-Support and Self-Propagation. All three components were intended to render the church structures in the People’s Republic of China as “autonomous”, i.e. financially and politically distinct from Western organisations, as possible. Cf. John Tong’s article “The Church from 1949 to 1990”, in Jean-Paul Wiest and Edmond Tang (eds), *The History of the Catholic Church in China*, Maryknoll / New York: Orbis Books 1994, pp. 7-27.

<sup>55</sup> Most FHA sources on Christianity during the Ming and Qing periods are, in fact, catalogued as part of the category “Intrusion of Imperialism” (*Diguo zhuyi qinlüe lei* 帝国主义侵略类).

of the new socialist era. During the early of CCP rule, religious movements were often closely linked to political opposition - epitomised by the Dalai Lama - and were therefore regarded with much suspicion by the state authorities. This directly affected the academic research of religious history: Access to archives was severely restricted for foreign and Chinese researchers alike, and even the academic institutions entitled to carry out research into religious affairs were subjected to thorough scrutiny.<sup>56</sup> In June 1982, the CCP organ “Red Flag” (*Hongqi* 红旗) published the Central Committee’s “Document 19”, which stated that certain religious movements, including Christianity, had a positive role to play in the reconstruction of China’s society, following the devastations of the Cultural Revolution.<sup>57</sup> But it was not until the middle of Deng Xiaoping’s years of reform that publications on the subject of Christianity in China began to become available - albeit initially only to a small academic audience.<sup>58</sup> The relatively limited interest in Chinese Christianity began to widen significantly during the following decade, along with that in other popular

---

<sup>56</sup> Contacts with established Chinese historians and with the Institute for World Religions (*Shijie zongjiao yanjiusuo* 世界宗教研究所, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (Beijing)), confirm this observation. Only in recent years the state’s attitude to religious studies seems to have shown signs of relaxation, while archives are switching towards increasingly commercial admission criteria.

<sup>57</sup> The widely-circulated document was entitled “The Basic Viewpoint and Policy on the Religious Question during the Socialist Period in China”. For a ‘Three-Self’ viewpoint, see Luo Zhufeng (ed), *Religion under Socialism in China*, Armonk and London: M. E. Sharpe 1991, p. xvi; otherwise see Duan Qi, “Contextualization in the Contemporary Chinese Church” in Philip Wickeri and Lois Cole, *Christianity and Modernization: A Chinese Debate*, Hong Kong: DAGA Press 1995, pp. 49-50.

<sup>58</sup> The first publications were local in nature, concentrating on remnants of Christian history in the vicinity of the contributing scholars (such as the Jesuit churches and cemeteries in Beijing), as well as publications of limited circulation for the consumption of local congregations. See, for instance, Lin Hua 林华, Gao Zhiyu 高志瑜 et al., *Lishi yihen: Li madou ji mingqing xifang chuanjiaoshi mudi* 历史一痕: 利玛窦及明清西方传教士墓地 (“Traces of history: The tombs of Matteo Ricci and of [other] Western missionaries during the Ming and Qing”), Beijing: *Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe* 中国人民大学出版社 1994 [reprint of an earlier unpublished version produced at the People’s University]. The history of Catholicism in Shanghai is summarised in Ruan Renze 阮任泽 and Gao Zhenrong 高震农, *Shanghai zongjiaoshi* 上海宗教史 (“A religious history of Shanghai”), Shanghai: Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences Press *Shanghai shehui kexueyuan chubanshe* 上海社会科学院出版社 1994, pp. 609-786, with some interesting remarks on the period during the century of prohibition on pp. 623-629. See also Norman Walling, “The Catholic Church in Shanghai: Yesterday and Today”, in: *Tripod*,

religious movements.<sup>59</sup> The enthusiastic response from China's publishing houses can also be explained through the commercialisation of the sector: Writing about popular (religious) customs may in many cases be regarded as a lucrative opportunity to sell to a popular audience. To summarise: Both in Taiwan and in the People's Republic factors are currently at work favouring the formation of inculturated expressions of Christianity. This has led to a renewed interest, both journalistic and academic, in the nature of Christianity in general and in its development in China in particular. For the first time since the return of Western missionaries in the nineteenth century, Chinese academics are thus taking an interest in Christianity as a Chinese movement, relying to a diminishing degree on the historical and doctrinal interpretations of Western missiologists.

c) *China's Christian history discovered by social science*

The events of the later decades of the twentieth century also had a profound impact on the self-perception of Western historians with regard to China as the object of their research. Sinologists intent on breaking the philological mould welcomed the swift adoption of research methods "borrowed" from the social sciences - anthropology and sociology in particular. Paris - home to the *Annales* - also produced one of the first sinologists who re-examined the archival evidence on the development of Christianity in China. *Chine et christianisme*, authored by Jacques Gernet in 1982, consciously presented a "Chinese viewpoint" to the history of the missions in the late

---

pp. 33-44, as well as the following article by Shen Shiwei, "Shanghai's Old Church", in: *Tripod* (Ding □□), August 1995, pp. 45-56 (translated by Walling).

<sup>59</sup> The number of publications on (orthodox) Buddhism and Daoism has increased drastically since the mid-1980s. Introductions to expressions of popular religiosity ("superstition") are proving even more popular - including geomantics (*fengshui* □□□□), palmistry (*zhangwen* □□□□) and physiognomy (*xiangshu* □□□□), clairvoyance (*shenshili* □□□□□□) as well as the general belief in ghosts and spirits (*gui-shen wenhua* □□□□□□□□).

Ming empire, by extending the quest for primary sources into hitherto unused archival documents.<sup>60</sup> Such sources had already been used by researchers of missiological background, as proof of the hostility of the Mandarins against Europe's missionaries. Gernet now employed these materials in order to interpret the "reaction" of the highly educated Chinese officials to the teachings from the West.<sup>61</sup> Gernet's prime examples are "A Collection of Writings for the Destruction of Vicious Doctrines" (*Poxieji* 辟邪集), "A Collection of Writings for the Refutation of Heresy" (*Pixieji* 辟異集), "Helping [the Holy Dynasty] in Refutation" ([*Shengchao*] *zuopi* 聖朝助辟) and "It Cannot be Tolerated Any More" (*Budeyi* 不堪再忍).<sup>62</sup> All four publications were produced between 1623 and 1664 in the Lower Yangtse Region, the heartland of Chinese Christianity, composed by authors who had a strong sense of cultural identity. Whereas the *Poxieji* (1640) was the editorial outcome of a variety of anti-Christian motivations,<sup>63</sup> the *Pixieji* (1643) - though intellectually disguised as a

<sup>60</sup> For a critical appraisal of Gernet's analysis of the available source materials - in particular with reference to Japanese sources not included by Gernet, see Adrianus C. Dudink, "The Sheng-ch'ao tso-p'i (1623) of Hsü Ta-shou", in: Leonard Blussé and Harriet T. Zurndorfer (eds), *Conflict and Accommodation in Early Modern East Asia: Essays in Honour of Erik Zürcher*, Leiden/New York/Cologne: E. J. Brill 1993, pp. 94-140. The author emphasises the selective quality of Gernet's work, and points to earlier critical reviews (cited in Erik Zürcher, Nicolas Standaert and Adrianus C. Dudink, *Bibliography of the Jesuit Mission in China (ca. 1580 - ca. 1680)*, Leiden: Centre of Non-Western Studies, Leiden University 1991, p. 20). Gernet defended his interpretation in "Problèmes d'acclimatation du christianisme dans la Chine du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle", in: Alain Forest and Yoshiharu Tsuboi (eds), *Catholicisme et sociétés asiatiques*, Tokyo: Sophia University 1988, pp. 35-46.

An equivalent analysis of the contemporary (intellectual) Japanese reaction can be found in George Ellison, *Deus Destroyed - The Image of Christianity in Modern Japan*, Cambridge / Massachusetts: Harvard University Press 1973. The crucial anti-Christian writings of the early Tokugawa period - *Ha Daiusu* 大いす, *Kengiruku* 傾圮, *Kirishitan Monogatari* 異聞物語 and *Ha Kirishitan* 異聞 - are fully reproduced in translated form (second part of Ellison's monograph, pp. 257-392). In particular, Ellison's analysis of the (double) apostate Fabian Fucan, Jesuit friar and later the author of significant anti-Christian writings, is noteworthy (see *ibidem* pp. 142-184).

<sup>61</sup> The title *China and the Christian Impact: A Conflict of Cultures* was chosen by the author as the title of the English translation in order to further underline Gernet's theory of cultural incompatibility.

<sup>62</sup> In addition, Dudink introduces the compilation *Yuandao pixie shuo* 遠道辟邪說 (1636). See A. C. Dudink, "The Sheng-ch'ao tso-p'i", pp. 98-104.

<sup>63</sup> The editor of the *Poxie ji* was a Buddhist layman with the name Xu Changzhi 徐昌志 (1582-1672). The "Confucian" alias of the Buddhist monk Ouyi Zhixu was Zhong Shisheng 鍾世生 (zi: Zhenzhi 震志). Based on Dudink, "The Sheng-ch'ao tso-p'i", pp. 96-98 and 104-107, Timothy Barrett recently highlighted the connection between both texts and Buddhism. See T. H. Barrett,

Confucian refutation - was written (predominantly) by the Buddhist scholar Ouyi Zhixu 歐陽智序 (1599-1655). The *Zuopi* (1623)<sup>64</sup> author Xu Dashou 徐大猷 was the son of the eminent Ming statesman Xu Fuyuan 徐敷公 (1535-1604),<sup>65</sup> while the author of the *Budeyi*, Yang Guangxian 楊光先 (1597-1669), was the main exponent of the anti-Christian elite discourse during the late Ming period. All three documents concentrate on reducing the significance of the Jesuits' contribution to the mathematical and technological knowledge of the Ming court. They also seek to undermine Christianity's theological foundations, as interpreted by the authors, by revealing the un-Confucian - and hence "un-Chinese" - nature of the religion. How could any godhead expect a filial son to prefer monastic solitude to the duty of bestowing his parents with children? Why did it take the Western god several millennia before making his appearance in the most important civilisation on earth? And why did the foreigners' genealogies of the first centuries of humanity not correspond to the records of the Xia, Shang and Zhou? The intellectuals furthermore remarked on the iconoclastic tendencies of the missionaries who, in their blind hatred of all things Buddhist, advocated the closure of shrines and temples. These temples, however, also harboured the "Ten Thousand Years Tablet" dedicated to the emperor's longevity. Opposing Buddhist temples was thus equivalent to questioning the link

---

"Ignorance and the Technology of Information: Some Comments on China's Knowledge of the West on the Eve of the 'Western Invasion'", in: *Asian Affairs: Journal of the Royal Society for Asian Affairs*, XXVI-1 (February 1995), p. 26.

<sup>64</sup> Gernet placed the publication in the years between 1633 and 1639. The year 1623 is derived from Dudink's belief that Xu Dashou composed the refutation under the fresh impression of the (second) Nanjing persecution (1616-1617) and immediately after the White Lotus rebellion of 1622. Interestingly, Dudink suggests the likelihood of Xu Dashou as a disillusioned former Christian convert or catechumen, fully *au fait* with the rituals and beliefs of China's Christians. This hypothesis would explain Xu Dashou's zeal, expressed in the writing, publishing and distribution of his work. See Dudink, "The *Sheng-ch'ao tso-p'i*", p. 95, as well as pp. 130-133. The personal background of Xu Dashou is relatively obscure. For a brief biographical introduction, see A. C. Dudink, "Christianity in Late Ming China - Five Studies", PhD thesis: University of Leiden 1995, pp. 240-242.

<sup>65</sup> Biographical information is almost non-existent. See Dudink, "The *Sheng-ch'ao tso-p'i*", pp. 107-109.

between popular religiosity and the quasi-divine position of the emperor - and thus of his authority as such. To the mental corruption sowed into the minds of imperial subjects, the critical intellectuals added the charge of subversion against the authority of the imperial throne.<sup>66</sup> For this reason - and this is Jacques Gernet's ultimate conclusion - Christianity was diametrically opposed to the values of Chinese civilisation, and thus ultimately doomed to failure.

Two decades after Gernet first challenged the tradition of European missiology, one lasting effect has become manifest. Though the majority of monographs dealing with Christianity in China still focus on the missionary as the chief agent (and still utilise mostly European source materials), the new outlook in research into Chinese Christianity has produced an indelible imprint on the academic discourse. In Nicolas Standaert's analysis of Yang Tingyun, David Mungello's examination of elite Christianity in late imperial Hangzhou,<sup>67</sup> or in Erik Zürcher's comparison of Han Buddhism with Ming Christianity, the influence of Gernet's seminal work is ever-present. Opposition to Gernet focuses on his "conflict theory" - of the ultimate incompatibility of Chinese civilisation with the European Christian world view. Gernet's opponents, such as Paul Rule, argue that most opposition was political in nature, rather than philosophical.<sup>68</sup> The lives of eminent Confucian scholars such as Xu Guangqi and Yang Tingyun may be taken as a case in point.<sup>69</sup>

---

<sup>66</sup> Cf. J. Gernet, *Chine et christianisme*, p. 146, referring to the *Poxieji*, section III, chapter 1.

<sup>67</sup> See D. Mungello, *The Forgotten Christians of Hangzhou*, Honolulu: Univ. of Hawai'i Press 1994.

<sup>68</sup> Eloquently expressed in Paul Rule, *K'ung-tzu or Confucius? The Jesuit Interpretation of Confucianism*, Sydney, London and Boston: Allen & Unwin 1986.

<sup>69</sup> Christian literati from the late Ming period have been allocated a place of honour in the historiography of Christianity in China by Christians and non-Christians alike. Non-Christian scholars and state officials today tend to stress the scientific (and therefore "patriotic") contribution of the Christian literati, whereas Chinese Christians see respected personalities such as Xu Guangqi as defenders in an otherwise hostile environment. See William Peterson, "Why did they become Christians? Yang T'ing-yun, Li Chih-tsao and Hsü Kuang-ch'i", in: Ronan and Oh (eds.), *East Meets West*, pp. 129-152. Otherwise, see Zhang Tingyu 張廷玉 et al., *Ming shi* 明史 ("A History of the Ming"), Beijing: *Zhonghua shuju* 中華書局 1974, vol. (ce 冊) 21, *juan* 卷 251, pp. 6493-6493,

Gernet's analysis cleared the path for an interpretation of the Christian phenomenon from a "Chinese" point of view. During the 1990s, a small group of Western academics attempted to demonstrate the impact of Christian concepts on the lives of ordinary Chinese converts. The same methodology which had been pioneered by *Annales* scholarship for the study of European history was now applied to a sinological topic. Akin to Carlo Ginzburg's miller,<sup>70</sup> the cosmology of the historical object had now become the focus of attention. For the study of Chinese Christianity this implied a shift of parameters, away from the European missionary as the centre of agency towards the Chinese Christian - or even to the opponent or indifferent neighbour of the same Christian. The belated arrival of the "history of the common person" in the research of Chinese Christianity challenged the quasi monopoly status of *missionary* history, which portrayed the development of Christianity in China as a by-product of the missionary enterprise alone. Needless to say, this viewpoint tended to over-emphasise the role of the male component of Christian congregations. To be fair, this bias is not just due to the male prerogative of priesthood in Catholicism, but also to the male preponderance in traditional Chinese society. Only recently have Christian women become a focus of research into Chinese Christianity.<sup>71</sup> This recent

---

"Xu Guangqi zhuan 徐光启传" ("A biography of Xu Guangqi"). The most representative work on Yang Tingyun is Nicolas Standaert, *Yang Tingyun - Confucian and Christian in Late Ming China: His Life and Thought*, Leiden: E. J. Brill 1988. See also Willard J. Peterson, "Why did they become Christians? Yang T'ing-yun, Li Chih-tsao and Hsü Kuang-ch'i", in: Charles E. Ronan and Bonnie B. C. Oh (eds.), *East Meets West: The Jesuits in China, 1582-1773*, Chicago: Loyola University Press 1988, pp. 129-152.

<sup>70</sup> Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms - The Cosmology of a Sixteenth Century Miller*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press 1980.

<sup>71</sup> Such examples of "gender history" include Gail King, "Candida Xu and the Growth of Christianity in China in the Seventeenth Century", in: *Monumenta Serica*, XLVI (1998), pp. 49-66 and Robert Entenmann, "Christian Virgins in Eighteenth Century Sichuan", in: Daniel H. Bays (ed.), *Christianity in China - From the Eighteenth Century to the Present*, Stanford University Press 1996, pp. 180-194.

The same theme is analysed from a Protestant angle in Jessie G. Lutz and Rolland Ray Lutz, *Hakka Chinese Confront Protestant Christianity, 1850-1900: with the Autobiographies of Eight Hakka Christians, and Commentary*, Armonk / New York: M. E. Sharpe 1998. See also Kwok Pui-lan 郭佩兰, *Chinese Women and Christianity 1860-1927*, Atlanta / Georgia: Scholars Press 1992 and,



trend also reflects the current academic emphasis on aspects of “gender” in the missionary experience.<sup>72</sup> Other aspects of “mentality”-type historical approaches (histories of fear and of the imagined, of social networks as well as of science<sup>73</sup>) may lend themselves to partial discoveries and re-interpretations in the field, while the post-modernist search for “the other” has yet to make an impact. A peculiar expression of “anthropological interest” reveals itself in recent writings by Erik Zürcher, based on the introduction to the role of religion in China by C. K. Yang.<sup>74</sup> Erik Zürcher examined the currently available Christian writings of the late Ming period. His results revealed that the interpretation of the first generation of Chinese Christians bore but scant resemblance to the doctrines of established Catholic orthodoxy.<sup>75</sup> Zürcher’s central conclusion is that the spread of Christianity was severely hampered by the inflexible attitudes of contemporary Catholicism. The siege mentality and the incessant warfare between leaders of competing denominations produced by Reformation and Counter-Reformation in Europe had reduced the Vatican’s readiness to compromise with its opponents. Ever-ready to stage a “reconquista” against the faithless European north, the Propaganda Fide reduced the scope for a comprehensive policy of accommodation, as practised by certain parts of

---

in the context of missionary education, Gael Graham, *Gender, Culture and Christianity*, p. 29 ff. (concerning missionary efforts to improve the welfare and status of China’s women).

<sup>72</sup> Often focusing on the conflict between the Christian imperative of monogamy and traditional patterns of polygamy and polygyny. See Fiona Bowie, “The Inculturation Debate in Africa”, pp. 83-90.

<sup>73</sup> The most ample source of information is still Joseph Needham’s encyclopaedic and ongoing project *Science and Civilization in China*. An example of the scientific involvement of the Jesuit missionaries is illustrated in Peter M. Engelfriet, *Euclid in China: The Genesis of the First Chinese Translation of Euclid’s Elements, Books I-IV (Jihe yuanben, Beijing 1607) and its Reception up to 1723*, New York: E. J. Brill 1998.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. C. K. Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society: A Study of Contemporary Social Functions of Religion and some of their Historical Factors*, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press 1970, in particular pp. 104-126 and 278-293. The most salient points of his argumentation are discussed in Erik Zürcher, “Jesuit Accommodation and the Chinese Cultural Imperative”, in: David Mungello (ed.), *The Chinese Rites Controversy - Its History and Meaning*, Nettetal: Steyler Verlag 1994, pp. 71-92.

the Society of Jesus in their overseas mission. Hamstrung by the interference of the central administration in Rome, the Jesuit China missionaries were caught in the conundrum of wanting to be seen in a double role as aspiring scholar officials and missionary priests. The missionaries thus had to justify their priestly profession to the Confucian literati they sought to convert, and at the same time to explain their policy of accommodation to an increasingly sceptical clerical audience at home. In the final analysis, the constant need to compromise acted as a permanent brake on the proliferation of Christianity in China. Unable to integrate into the ritual mainstream of Chinese culture, Christianity was doomed to “marginality”.<sup>76</sup> A problematic area, in this context, is the differentiation between the “heterodox” subculture - tolerated by the state’s guardians of orthodoxy, but discouraged as essentially “superstitious” - and the world of - outright illegal - “heresy”.<sup>77</sup>

Robert Entenmann examined the development of Christianity in eighteenth century Sichuan, mainly based on French missionary correspondence.<sup>78</sup> Entenmann’s thesis can be summarised in two cardinal points: Christians, at the end of the eighteenth century (in southern China), originated from all sections of the social

---

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Eric Zürcher, “The Lord of Heaven and the Demons: Strange Stories from a Late Ming Christian Manuscript”, in: G. Naundorf et al. (eds), *Religion und Philosophie in Ostasien - Festschrift für Hans Steiniger zum 65. Geburtstag*, Würzburg 1985, pp. 357 - 376.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Nicolas Standaert, “New Trends in the Historiography of Christianity in China” in: *The Catholic Historical Review*, LXXXIII- 4 (October 1997) : “Christianity in China”, pp. 607-609.

<sup>77</sup> The results of the interrogations used for this thesis suggest that most Christians became followers of the cult in the full knowledge that Christianity was situated outside the parameters of orthodoxy. On the other hand, the Christians usually vehemently denied any accusation of “heresy” and “subversion”, which leads to the assumption that most Christians were not intent on joining a “heretical” cult. The problem of defining “heresy” and “heterodoxy” is discussed on p. 185 ff. of this thesis.

<sup>78</sup> See Robert Entenmann, “Chinese Catholic Clergy and Catechists in Eighteenth Century Szechuan”, in: *Actes du VI<sup>e</sup> Colloque International de Sinologie de Chantilly*, Paris: Institut Ricci / Centre d’Études Chinoises 1995, pp. 389-410, as well as his “The Establishment of Chinese Catholic Communities in Early Ch’ing Szechuan”, in: *Actes du VII<sup>e</sup> Colloque International de Sinologie de Chantilly*, Paris: Institut Ricci / Centre d’Études Chinoises 1995, pp. 147-161 and “Catholics and Society in Eighteenth-Century Sichuan”, in: Daniel Bays (ed.), *Christianity on China*, pp. 8-23. Entenmann’s work constitutes a refreshing departure from earlier, hagiographic accounts of the missionary enterprise in the province. A good example of traditional missiology focusing on Sichuan is

spectrum and belonged to a variety of ethnic backgrounds. Christianity had secondly developed into a popular religious cult, which attracted followers from a wide range of religious orientations, usually offshoots of popular Buddhism.<sup>79</sup> While the results of the present thesis by and large correspond to the second point (integration into the popular religious fabric of late imperial culture), Entenmann's first observation runs counter to my own findings. Most of the Christian communities encountered in official and missionary documents are described as being "poor" or even "destitute". The only exceptions stem, interestingly, from Sichuan, target destination for migrant workers from the north. The reason for this discrepancy is probably to be found in the different socio-economic composition of northern China; whereas the Jiangnan and most of the southern provinces had established vibrant merchant communities, the North China Plains were still dominated by feudal patterns of large-scale farming. Some areas in the north-east were so poor that one of the most popular "escape routes" for boys was to seek employment as eunuchs in the Forbidden City.<sup>80</sup>

R.G. Tiedemann recently followed up indications linking certain sectarian movements in the eighteenth century to Christian communities.<sup>81</sup> Tiedemann's main theory, distilled from missionary correspondence held at Roman archives, is that such links existed because of the high degree of fluidity between religious movements in the eighteenth century. Mass conversions, according to Tiedemann, were thus a

---

Léonide Guiot's *La Mission du Su-tchuen au XVIII<sup>me</sup> siècle: Vie et apostolat de Mgr Pottier, son fondateur*, Paris: Téqui 1892, published on the first centenary of Pottier's death.

<sup>79</sup>See Robert Entenmann, "Catholics and Society in Eighteenth-Century Sichuan", pp. 22 - 23.

<sup>80</sup> See the introduction to the - popular - biography of the last senior palace eunuch of the Qing, 'Little-Dezhang' (□□□□□□), in: Yang Zhengguang □□□□□□, *Zhongguo zuihou de yige dataijian* □□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□ ("China's last grand eunuch"), [Changsha]: *Qunzhong chubanshe* □□□□□□□□□□ 1994, pp. 1-5. On "exit routes" out of poverty, see G. W. Skinner, "Mobility Strategies in Late Imperial China", p. 354 ff. The phenomenon of court eunuchs is otherwise discussed in Mary M. Anderson, *Hidden Power: The Palace Eunuchs of Imperial China*, Buffalo / New York: Prometheus Books 1990.

symptom of the general ease with which commoners were ready to adopt a (new) religious identity. “Policing” neophytes was even under the most ideal circumstances an almost impossible task for the few European missionaries. Following the prohibition of 1724, any missionary invigilation of converts practically ceased, turning China’s Christians into an ideal laboratory for religious innovation and for syncretic experimentation with other sectarian movements.<sup>82</sup> Dr Tiedemann’s study is thus a valuable contribution to the development of popular Christianity in the mid-Qing period, in particular for the Shandong region. It ends with a number of open questions, most crucially about the fate of the “baptised ‘sectarians’” after 1724, and about the treatment of such “old Christians” by the missionaries of the post-Opium War period. One of the motivations behind the present thesis is to find answers to these questions, while analysing the phenomenon as part of a far wider religious landscape unfurling during the eighteenth century.

Chinese research into Christianity has been slow in divorcing itself from the missiological tradition of the past century - in particular because the nationalistic view of China’s modern history saw Western imperialism as a concomitant of foreign influence. A Sino-centric interpretation of Chinese Christianity removes old certainties, with consequences for China’s self-perception in the modern world. Though Christianity may thus still be too controversial a topic to reinterpret, a sea-change has occurred since the early 1990s in the interpretation of popular religious movements in the country’s not too distant past.<sup>83</sup> Historians such as Qin Baoqi

---

<sup>81</sup> See R. G. Tiedemann, “Christianity and Chinese ‘Heterodox Sects’: Mass Conversion and Syncretism in Shandong Province in the Early Eighteenth Century”: in *Monumenta Serica* XLIV (1996), pp. 339-382.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 374-378.

<sup>83</sup> The immediate present is a different matter, since the PRC authorities are facing a tide of religious activity in the countryside. News reports since 1995 mention popular healers with mass followings,

□□□□□ of the People's University in Beijing (*Zhongguo renmin daxue* □□□□ □□□□□□□□), but also a growing band of young academics publishing in renowned historical journals, are challenging the hitherto accepted mantra of secret cults being part of a heroic struggle of China's peasant masses against feudalism and (Manchurian and Western) imperialism. For many of the older Chinese historians, however, the de-politicisation of academic research in mainland China implied that they were free to return to the academic interests which had to be abandoned in the wake of the Cultural Revolution. The period after 1976 has been dominated by research into the scientific and political aspects of Sino-Western relations.<sup>84</sup> Full access to archives with Christian materials may yet provide a basis for a more radically revised view of Chinese Christianity. A new point of departure may have been reached with the work of the Hangzhou scholar Wang Xiaochao.<sup>85</sup> Focusing on the lives and publications of late Ming literati-converts, Wang attempts to illustrate the parallels between the development of Christianity in imperial China and in the Roman empire. His monograph follows the arguments of Christian "apologists" (i.e. intellectuals who argued that Christianity was fully compatible with Romano-Hellenic civilisation: Minucius Felix, Tertullian and Lactantius)<sup>86</sup>, and compares these with the writings of eminent Ming converts (Yang Tingyun, Li Zhizao and, chiefly, Xu Guangqi). The first two parts contain an analysis of the intellectual background, the arguments of anti-

---

heterodox Christian "house churches" and even a resurgence of the "White Lotus" in certain parts of the South-West. Compare further examples listed in the "Epilogue" for a fuller picture.

<sup>84</sup> See, for instance, the useful - and very traditional - compilation by Huang Shijian □□□□□□, *Zhongxi guanxishi nianbiao* □□□□□□□□□□□□□□ ("A Chronology of Sino-Western Contacts"), Hangzhou: *Zhejiang renmin chubanshe* □□□□ □□□□□□ 1994. Zhong Shuhe □□□□□□ (ed.), *Zou xiang shijie congshu* □□□□□□□□□□□□, Changsha: *Yuelu chubanshe* □□□□□□□□□□ 1985, contains a series of essays on China and the West by Rong Hong and other leading Qing officials at the end of the nineteenth century.

<sup>85</sup> Xiaochao Wang, *Christianity and Imperial Culture: Chinese Christian Apologetics in the Seventeenth Century and their Latin Patristic Equivalent*, Leiden, Boston and Cologne: E. J. Brill 1998. The monograph appears to be a translation from the Chinese of the author's doctoral thesis completed at the University of Leeds in 1996.

Christian traditionalists and the responses of Christian intellectuals from among the elites of the Roman and Ming empire.<sup>87</sup> The final part contains an - implicit - answer to Gernet's thesis of fundamental antagonism. By dividing the encounter with Christianity in both civilisations into a "socio-political" and into a "religio-philosophical" sphere, the author arrives at a nuanced conclusion: Within the parameters of the former sphere, Christianity in China could very well be accepted and reconciled with existing patterns of authority - had the political development during the Ming (and during the unmentioned mid-Qing) only taken a different course. A crucial difference existed within the latter, religio-philosophical category: Whereas Roman apologists attempted to reconcile Christian morality with the ethics of Hellenic philosophy, they relentlessly attacked the very essence of pagan religion. Equally, Ming apologists intended to replace Buddhism as the chief competitor to Christian religiosity, but their message concerning ritual elements of Confucianism was more ambivalent and their choice of aspects of (European) Christianity highly selective.<sup>88</sup> Thus, the author concludes, Christianity merely became a "subculture" and the inculturation process remained incomplete.<sup>89</sup>

Wang Xiaochao's contribution added a valuable comparative interpretation to the analysis of imperial Chinese Christianity, but it remains wedded to the analysis of Ming dynasty elite writings. A very different type of research can be found in the recent dissertation by Ma Zhao.<sup>90</sup> Based on extensive research at the First Historical

---

<sup>86</sup> See *ibidem*, p. 8.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibidem*, "Part I: Latin Apologists and Graeco-Roman Culture" (pp. 7-77) and "Part II: Chinese Christian Apologists and Chinese Culture" (pp. 79-203), respectively.

<sup>88</sup> See "Part III: Conclusions and Comparisons" (pp. 207-236), in particular pp. 219-222.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 227-229.

<sup>90</sup> Ma Zhao 马兆, "Shilun Qianlong shiqi (1736-1796) chajin tianzhujiao shijian" 试论乾隆时期基督教传入的初步研究 ("A preliminary study of events relating to the prohibition of Christianity during the Qianlong period, 1736-1796"), MA thesis:

Archives, Ma Zhao's exploration of Christianity during the Qianlong period is based on the premise that the Christian communities were part of the wider pattern of religious movements during the eighteenth century. Despite acknowledging the state officials' general lack of insight into the differences between different religious movements, Ma Zhao tends to sympathise with the intentions of the Chinese state. In a statement which would have provoked de Groot's heartfelt ire, the author holds that the Qing officials fought "heretical" movements in order to guarantee the stability of society.<sup>91</sup> On the other hand, the dissertation was written with the unmistakable intention of providing the viewpoints of all parties involved: State officials, European missionaries and indigenous Christians. Due to this differentiating approach and because of the author's unprecedented use of the former imperial archives, Ma Zhao's study should be regarded as a promising beginning in the reinterpretation of Christianity's place in China's more recent past.

The present thesis seeks to continue the search for the nature of non-elite Christianity, and aims at extending the results of earlier research into a larger, more systematic picture of Chinese Christianity. This approach in itself is not intended as a negative criticism of Gernet's findings - on the contrary, *Action et réaction* still provides the most challenging basis for research into Christianity in China. The results of this thesis will show that the compatibility of Christianity with Chinese traditions depended on the actual self-perception of each individual Christian community concerned. In some cases, Christians opted to segregate themselves from their neighbours by adopting certain stipulations of Christian doctrine which ran counter to established communal traditions. In other cases, the socio-ritual harmony within a

---

Zhongguo renmin daxue qingshi yanjiusuo 中国历史研究所 (Beijing: Research Centre for Qing History, People's University), June 1999.

larger community was preserved without major disputes to report. The great majority of verdicts made by high-ranking officials, however, focused on cases of inter-communal conflict, and were thus condemnatory. On the other hand, we should remember that statements made by and for state officials were, by their very nature, preoccupied with pleasing the ears of the superior authorities: For the reporting officials, any expression of sympathy with the ideas of suspected “sectarian criminals” could result in reprimanding and demotion; for the villagers under investigation, persistence could result in the extension of their physical suffering at the hands of the magistrate’s men.<sup>92</sup> The mere fact that Christianity managed to survive and even multiply during the period of prohibition seems to indicate that Gernet’s reservations were mostly founded on theoretical objections by the literati elite rather than on the social and ritual realities of Christian commoners. Whereas past research mostly concentrated on the reasons for the failure to “convert the Chinese”, the present thesis will try to establish the actual effect of the European mission on China’s convert population. It will hence not attempt to evaluate the degree of “success” or “failure” of the missionaries’ effort to establish a Chinese Christendom as a mirror image of contemporary European models, but rather seek to analyse the perceptions of the converts and their descendants. The focus is therefore not on its functioning as a theologically intact system but on Christianity as a fascinating example of “involuntary adaptation” of imported religious concepts to the local cultural and intellectual traditions of late imperial China.<sup>93</sup> Others’ missionary “failure” here

---

<sup>91</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 35 and 37.

<sup>92</sup> The procedures regulating correspondence to and from the court are explained in Ch’ien Mu, *Traditional Government in Imperial China*, pp. 127-128.

<sup>93</sup> This interpretation seems to confirm Michael Pye’s observation of ‘dynamically open’ “syncretic” movements - ever changing, temporary traditions, yet appearing fully coherent to the contemporary participants. The alternative, “synthetic” development of Christianity into a new religion, which could have led to the creation of a theologically and liturgically separate religion, would not have been



becomes a fortunate historical condition. The most important results of the present research into eighteenth century popular Christianity can be found in the following paragraph.

#### ***4. The main arguments in seven theses***

1) The spread of Christianity in China should be seen as part of the general development of popular Chinese religion during the late imperial period, including the secret cults which flourished during the same time.

2) The reaction of the imperial administration after 1724 can only be understood within the context of the fissures appearing in the “Golden Era” of the eighteenth century. A booming population created an increasingly volatile political situation, which led to economic and demographic destabilisation and had grave consequences for China’s social order. It was hence in the state’s interest to protect social stability at any cost.

3) State action against Christianity followed the tradition of protecting the subjects from heretical thought, and formed part of a wider campaign against proscribed religious cults. The persecutions were in no way different from purges against other popular movements - until the advent of Western powers in the nineteenth century changed the pattern of confrontation.

4) With the exception of - perhaps - those intellectuals who were in close contact with Western missionaries, the majority of Chinese Christians incorporated their new creed into the commonly accepted religious and socio-cultural traditions of

---

possible as long as the contacts with and memories of foreign missionaries survived. The absence of a feeling of irreversible isolation from its Euro-Christian roots thus also makes Chinese Christianity strikingly different from the religion of Japan’s Hidden Christians. For a more detailed discussion of Pye’s theories and their relevance in the Japanese context, see Stephen Turnbull, *The Kakure Kirishitan*

the late imperial period. Problems mainly arose when converts refused to follow communal ritual conventions in villages with a non-Christian majority, epitomised by the contentious issue of the ancestral rites.

5) After foreign missionaries had been banned from proselytising in China, successive generations of Christians accepted and preserved the key aspects of their ancestors' religious identity, and thus accelerated the process of Christianity's inculturation into the context of local Chinese society.

6) Having "inherited" their adherence to Christianity as a popular Chinese cult, the ancestral affiliation to Christianity served as a unifying factor for clan and village communities with a single ancestor. The same phenomenon could, under certain conditions, segregate families and clan-villages with Christian ancestors from their non-Christian neighbours. Inter-communal relations were, however, never predetermined, depending to a large extent on the social and "political" situation in a given locality.

7) The differences between Christians and non-Christians should be regarded as a culturally endogenous affair - in analogy to sectarian coexistence and conflict in other parts of the world. Accounts by visiting Westerners during the first decades of the nineteenth century confirm this observation: Whereas the (new) missionaries failed to recognise China's indigenous Christians as fellow - and therefore "proper" - Christians, the non-Christian population, as well as the Chinese state officials, perceived them as belonging to the same cultural community - as part of the culture and society of late imperial China.

---

*of Japan - A Study of Their Development, Beliefs and Rituals to the Present Day*, Richmond: Japan Library / Curzon Press 1998, pp. 11-12 and 223-227.

## Chapter 2: “Inculturation” - Defining a concept

Initially, the term “inculturation” was used to describe phenomena of cultural adaptation affecting societies.<sup>1</sup> The discourse continued into a more abstract mode, centring on incompatibilities in instances of inter-cultural dialogue.<sup>2</sup> The interest in the introduction of religions into foreign cultures, their dissemination in host societies and in the mutations new religions experience during this process is relatively recent.<sup>3</sup> Most authors on the topic have developed their own terminology, which implies that identical terms often convey different meanings - a coherent typology has yet to be developed.<sup>4</sup> However, most authors agree on the gradual, almost imperceptible nature of inculturation, leading to the transformation of established values and behavioural norms.<sup>5</sup> Its direction, motive force and target group vary according to the precise

---

<sup>1</sup> Introduced by Alfred Vierkant in *Die Stetigkeit im Kulturwandel*, Leipzig 1908, the terms ‘acculturation’ and ‘enculturation’ became widely (and interchangeably) used in the anthropological and sociological discourse of the 1930s - usually in the context of the changes “native cultures” underwent after being exposed to “Western civilisation”. See Nicholas Standaert, “Inculturation and Chinese-Christian Contacts in late Ming and early Qing”, in: *Ching Feng* XXXIV-4 (Dec. 1991), p. 226, footnote 7.

<sup>2</sup> See, for instance, the article by William T. Liu 劉國輝 (Liu Chu), “Xishu shehui kexue bentuhuade sizhong xingtai 社會學本土化過程的四種類型” (English parallel title: “Four Major Types of the Indigenization of Sociology”), in: *Xianggang shehui kexue xuebao* 香港社會科學學報 *Hong Kong Journal of Social Sciences* IV (Autumn 1994), pp. 171-183, as well as Xu Jilin 許繼林, “Bentuhuade lijie wuqu 本土化理解五區” (English title: “Some Responses to the Radical Thinking of Indigenization in Social Research”), in: *ibidem*, pp. 184-193.

<sup>3</sup> The recent discourse has tended to emphasise the permanently changing cultural phenotype of Christianity as a fundamental characteristic of the religion, and not as a mere historical by-product. The most relevant theories are summarised in Karl Josef Rivinius, “Inkulturation”, in: *Stimmen der Zeit*, CCXII-10 (October 1994), pp. 687-696.

<sup>4</sup> A significant first attempt was accomplished by Steven Kaplan, who provided a theoretical structure for the process of Christianity’s ‘Africanisation’. For theoretical considerations, see Steven Kaplan, “The Africanization of Missionary Christianity: History and Typology”, in: *Journal of Religion in Africa* XVI-3 (October 1986), pp. 178-180. For a brief discourse on the terminology - and, in particular, its limitations - see also Thomas Bamat and Jean-Paul Wiest, “The Many Faces of Popular Catholicism”, in: *idem* (eds), *Popular Catholicism in a World Church: Seven Case Studies in Inculturation*, Maryknoll / New York: Orbis Books 1999, pp. 6-9.

<sup>5</sup> This also applies to the inculturation of Asian religions into a Christian-occidental setting. For Buddhism see, for instance, the Martin Baumann, *Deutsche Buddhisten - Geschichte und*

nature of the local conditions. Inculturation is thus never complete, but directly inter-dependent on the changes wrought by time.<sup>6</sup>

The related terms acculturation and inculturation both describe the experience of confrontation between any external influence (in our context of socio-religious nature) and a resilient structure of traditions, with the external force striving for predominance over native tradition. Successful acculturation or inculturation can hence only take place if a sufficient degree of “de-culturation”<sup>7</sup> on either side of the spectrum has taken place: If the ingressing culture proves to be “weaker”, then the social community representing this culture will lose a decisive proportion of its original cultural identity and is bound to dissolve in the host society;<sup>8</sup> if the original culture is in a threatened position, a confrontation with external cultural elements can inflict a certain degree of cultural loss.<sup>9</sup> In the more recent missionary discourse, the term *acculturation* is increasingly being replaced by *inculturation*, perhaps reflecting a greater degree of inevitability in the process of cultural assimilation, and based on the

---

*Gemeinschaften*, Marburg: Diagonal Verlag 1993, as well as his article “Culture Contact and Valuation: Early German Buddhists and the Creation of a ‘Buddhism in Protestant Shape’”, in: *Numen* XLIV (1997), pp. 270-295. Also Philip A. Mellor, “Protestant Buddhism? The Cultural Translation of Buddhism in England”, in: *Religion* XXI-2 (1991), pp. 73-92 and Thomas A. Tweed, *The American Encounter with Buddhism 1844-1912 - Victorian Culture and the Limits of Dissent*, Bloomington: Indiana UP 1992. For a recent study of Islam in northern Europe, see Thomas Gerholm and Yngve Georg Lithman (eds), *The New Islamic Presence in Western Europe*, London: Mansell 1990.

<sup>6</sup> This observation reflects personal observations, although a similar view is taken in K. J. Rivinius, “Inkulturation”, p. 694, footnote 5.

<sup>7</sup> For a brief discourse on the terminology - and, in particular, its limitations - see Thomas Bamat and Jean-Paul Wiest, “The Many Faces of Popular Catholicism”, pp. 6-9.

<sup>8</sup> As the experience of immigrant communities in contemporary western Europe has demonstrated, the process of dissolution into the host culture is by no means immediate, and can - albeit temporarily - lead to a hardening of attitudes within the migrant community. See Ragnar Naess, “Being an Alevi Muslim in South-Western Anatolia and in Norway: The Impact of Migration on a Heterodox Turkish Community”, in Th. Gerholm / Y. G. Lithman (eds), *The New Islamic Presence in Western Europe*, pp. 174-195.

<sup>9</sup> Prime example for such cultural subjugation is the conquest of southern America by the Hispanic Kingdoms, enlightened missionaries such as Bartolomeo de las Casas being a notable exception. For a brief introduction to the latter, see Johannes Beckmann, “Die Lage der katholischen Missionen in China um 1815”, in: *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft* II (1946), pp. 207-209. For other examples see John W. Berry, “Acculturation as Varieties of Adaptation”, in Amado M. Padilla (ed.), *Acculturation: Theory, Models, and Some New Findings*, Boulder / Colorado: Westview Press 1980, pp. 2-25.

premise that religious and cultural traditions carry equal value throughout the world.<sup>10</sup>

Before we return to the topic of inculturation (and acculturation), we shall first attempt to contrast “inculturation” with to other crucial terms used in this thesis: “accommodation” and “adaptation”, as methodologies employed by the Jesuit missionaries.

### **1. “Ad gentes” - *Adaptation and accommodation as missionary methods***

From its very outset, Christianity was intended as a universal religion, transcending - unlike Judaism - the boundaries of kinship and ethnic identity.<sup>11</sup> The missionary imperative hence implied the necessity of adapting the message of Jesus, the Aramaic-speaking Nazarene, to the linguistic and cultural context of the community targeted for conversion. The preferred method of Christianity’s earliest messengers was highly individualistic: Peter, Christendom’s “bedrock” and a simple fisherman, used rustic allusions designed for an illiterate public. The missives of the more sophisticated and cosmopolitan Paul reflect early disputes in the Christian communities around the Mediterranean, questioning the degree to which “adaptation”

---

<sup>10</sup> For a brief introduction to the currently used terminology, see R. Costa, *One Faith, Many Cultures: Inculturation, Indigenization and Contextualization*, Maryknoll / New York: Orbis Books 1988. Hans Küng’s recent defence of “Christocentric” Christianity - as opposed to religious movements influenced by Christianity - is based on the centrality of Christ in the teachings of new religious movements. See Hans Küng, *Christianity - its Essence and History*, London: SCM Press 1995, quoted in Stephen Turnbull, *The Kakure Kirishitan of Japan*, pp. 220-223 and 226-227. On a more critical note, should the same criterion not also be applied to seventeenth-century European Catholicism, which had reduced the centrality of the Crucified in favour of the veneration of saints and of Mary?

<sup>11</sup> The following summary is based on the interpretations of the following authors: Julian Saldanha, *Inculturation*, Mumbai: St Paul Publications 1987, chapter II: “Mission History” (pp. 25-38), Andrew Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, chapter I: “The Gospel as Prisoner and Liberator of Culture” (in particular pp. 3-9 and 16-25), John Y. Fenton, *Transplanting Religious Traditions - Asian Indians in America*, New York: Praeger 1990. Also Michael Pye, “The Transplantation of Religions”, in: *Numen* XVI-4 (1969), pp. 234-239, Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels*, Harmondsworth: Penguin 1990, pp. 26-31 and 73 and Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message - The Missionary Impact on Culture*, Maryknoll / New York: Orbis Books 1989, pp. 71-73. Similar questions, in a Chinese context, are raised in Lee Shiu-keung, *The Cross and the Lotus*, Hong Kong: Christian Study Centre on Chinese Religion and Culture 1971.

was at all desirable.<sup>12</sup> One and a half millennia later, the same questions were asked relating to the correct missionary method in the new European colonies in Latin America, Africa and Asia. At the forefront was the Society of Jesus, confronted with the intellectual challenge of finding the most effective way of reaching, converting and retaining people brought up in a non-European environment.<sup>13</sup> Despite the politics of the counter-reformation, the Jesuits' missiological method must be seen as a response to the intellectual pluralism of the renaissance, resulting in a considerable output of philosophical and scientific writings. Jesuits, such as Alexander Valignano in the Indo-Asian mission, attempted to redress the lack of Christian writings in local languages by printing catechisms and hagiographies. This approach, soon referred to as *accommodation*, was taken to unprecedented lengths by Roberto Nobili.<sup>14</sup> His approach included copying the dress code, hair style and fasting habits of the religious Brahmin. The most controversial element of his method was to adopt elements of Hindu ritual for the Christian liturgy, while expunging Western traditions deemed objectionable by the local population. The same missionary method was applied in Japan (belatedly) and in China (immediately), where Jesuits such as Matteo Ricci

---

<sup>12</sup> See, for instance, Paul's epistles to the Colossians (chapter I), to the Galatians and Philippians (II). The letter to the Hebrews, though of unclear authorship, reflects similar traits. For a concise summary - complete with biblical references - see Julian Saldanha, *Inculturation*, pp. 16-20.

<sup>13</sup> The Society of Jesus (*Societas Iesu*) was founded on 15 August 1534 in Paris by Ignatius of Loyola (Inigo Lopez de Loyola) as an academic circle devoted to poverty and (re-)evangelisation. The formal affirmation of the Society by the Vatican in 1540 underlined its importance as a militant vanguard in regions threatened by Protestant "heresy" (mostly in central and northern Europe) and, particularly, in non-Christian territories recently acquired by Spain and Portugal as colonies. For more details, see L. Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, pp. 90-91.

<sup>14</sup> The term itself originated from a letter sent by Valignano to the uncompromising "Westerniser" Francisco Cabral in the middle of the 1570s. See, for Cabral and early Jesuit mission strategies in general, Josef Franz Schütte and John J. Coyne (transl.), *Valignano's Mission Principles for Japan*, Volume I: *From his Appointment as Visitor until his first Departure from Japan*, Part I: *The Problem (1573-1580)*, St Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources 1980, pp. 187-247. Severely critical of the latter's heavy-handed approach in the Japanese mission, Valignano stressed that "*es del todo necesario que nos acomodemos*". Also quoted in Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, p. 95. We should, however, not forget that mission strategies could differ depending on local circumstances; Valignano's attitude may indeed have been rather different in India. On his Jesuit confrère Roberto Nobili (Nobili

emulated the values of the scholar-officials in order to gain converts among the elite.<sup>15</sup> Conversions were by no means meant to be achieved on a mass basis, but were intended as the natural outcome of “friendly conversations” about nature, politics and scholarship.<sup>16</sup> Practices deemed objectionable, such as the application of priestly saliva on the foreheads of catechumens, were to be omitted.<sup>17</sup> The adoption of Confucian rites, condoning - crucially - the veneration of ancestors, was lauded by Europe’s intellectual elite, but attracted widespread criticism from other Catholic orders, and eventually contributed to the Society’s dissolution in 1773.<sup>18</sup> Outside the exclusive circles of the scholar-official class, European missionaries sought to apply methods modelled upon the missionary techniques of the Apostles.<sup>19</sup> By emphasising the close and frequent personal contact with the curious gentile as well as with the recent convert, the missionaries would ensure that the “mysteries of the Holy Faith”

---

signed his name as Roberto *de Nobili* in Latin texts only) see Vincent Cronin, *A Pearl to India - The Life of Robert de Nobili*, London: Rupert Hart-Davis 1959.

<sup>15</sup> The study by J. F. Moran, *The Japanese and the Jesuits: Alessandro Valignano in Sixteenth-Century Japan*, London and New York: Routledge 1993 on the Jesuit *Visitator* Alessandro Valignano (1539-1606) reveals the components of accommodation perceived as crucial: familiarity with etiquette and religious norms (pp. 54 ff. and 134), knowledge of local customs (pp. 134-136 and 161-172) and, importantly, fluency in the converts’ language and literature (pp. 178-179). Charles Boxer, rather admiringly, analysed the Jesuit accommodation to native festivals (e.g. the *Bon* festival of the dead) and social customs (e.g. the tea ceremony and norms governing personal hygiene). See C. R. Boxer, *The Christian Century in Japan*, pp. 50-54 and 212-217, respectively. Furthermore, the *dojuku* were modelled by Valignano in their appearance and function on Buddhist novices (*ibidem*, pp. 223-226). George Elison, however, considers the nature of accommodation an act of dissimulation (of Christianity’s genuine character), which was ultimately bound to lead to disappointment and resentment, both of the European missionaries and of the Japanese converts. See G. Elison, *Deus Destroyed*, pp. 248-254. A comprehensive account of such external signs of accommodation can be found in J. F. Schütte / J. Coyne (trans.), Volume I, Part II: *The Solution (1580-1582)*, pp. 41-48.

<sup>16</sup> See F. Margiotti, *Il cattolicesimo nello Shansi*, pp. 264-266

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 347. The same applied to the placing of the host into the mouths of female believers participating in the Eucharist, or to the practice of covering one’s head. *Ibidem*, pp. 355-359.

<sup>18</sup> The so-called Rites Controversy divided European Catholicism into two opposing factions which passionately argued for their respective cause. The most recent comprehensive study is David E. Mungello (ed.), *The Chinese Rites Controversy - its History and Meaning*, Nettetal: Steyler Verlag 1994. See also the monograph by George Minamiki, *The Chinese Rites Controversy - from its Beginnings to Modern Times*, Chicago: Loyola University Press 1985. For an anthropological analysis of ancestral worship see Emily M. Ahern, *The Cult of the Dead in a Chinese Village*, Stanford: University of California Press 1973.

were thoroughly explained, both in spoken language, as well as by means of printed tracts. The most vital ingredient in this plan was unfailing patience, in order to reiterate, query and weed out any misconceptions (*riti falsi*). Then, the *catechuminate* would be dispensed, consisting of the allocation of a Christian name (in the form of standardised Chinese character equivalents), of salt and oil, and - occasionally, if deemed appropriate - of exorcism. Over a period of three to four months, the mysteries of the new faith would be explained, in order to reinforce the Christian message in the hearts of the convert. Only once the missionaries were satisfied that every important aspect of the new faith had been completely understood, would baptism take place. In villages, the missionary would visit the houses of the Christians personally, at least three to four times per year, in order to instruct the most capable of the catechumens to act as the “heads” of the community of converts (*Capo de’ Christiani*, or *huizhang* 方丈). These would act instead of ordained priests, by congregating the converts on each church holiday for prayer, to explain the Christian doctrine at least on a weekly basis, as well to supervise and to exhort the faithful.<sup>20</sup> Though not entitled to administer the sacraments, the *huizhang* were expected to perform confessions and first communions.<sup>21</sup> Decisions concerning weddings, divorces and funerals were customarily left to the local community, while the missionaries would reserve the right to intervene during their seasonal visits.<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> See the pamphlet on conversion methods (*Relazione del Metodo che si tiene da Missionarii da Cina nel procurare le conversioni dell’Infideli i nel contrassili Matrimonii*) by Giuseppe Cerù, kept at the archives of the Propaganda Fide as document number SOCP, *Indie Orientali*, 1723-1725, ff. 21-23.

<sup>20</sup> Due to reservations concerning the theological reliability of Chinese Christians, *huizhang* 方丈 in early eighteenth century Sichuan were only supposed to instruct (Christian) children, leaving the more important missionary work to European missionaries. In practice, however, such attempts to regulate the Christian mission were doomed to failure, since European missionaries became an increasingly rare species during the eighteenth century. See Léonide Guiot, *La Mission du Su-tchuen au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, pp. 269-270 and also F. Margiotti, *Il cattolicesimo nello Shansi*, pp. 274 ff.

<sup>21</sup> G. Cerù, *Relazione del Metodo*, APF, SOCP, *Indie Orientali*, 1723-1725, folium 22V-23 R.

<sup>22</sup> ... which frequently presented them with almost insoluble problems. See pp. 125 ff. and 147 ff. of this thesis.



Eminent missionaries, such as Giuseppe Cerù, attacked the emphasis on quantity, identifying the policy of mass conversion as the direct cause of the high degree of apostasy in times of persecution. The imperative was thus clearly on the dialogue between catechist and missionary as individual beings.<sup>23</sup> In all practice this was nearly always impossible to achieve, not least because of linguistic difficulties, which led to the misinterpretations which this missionary method was meant to prevent. While the differences between the stipulated and the perceived could be but minute, the cumulative effect of such interpretations was bound to have serious effects on the religious edifice in the convert's mind. In other words, even the most attentive missionary could not prevent the gradual re-interpretation - or perceived "misinterpretation" - of Christian dogma, caused by and formed upon the cultural matrix of the convert.

## **2. Acculturation and inculturation**

Following the condemnation of Jesuit adaptation and accommodation, the discourse on missionary methods was put on hold until well into the nineteenth century, when a new generation of missionaries was able to experiment with missionary techniques.<sup>24</sup> But the crucial impetus only occurred in the second half of

---

<sup>23</sup> See G. Cerù, *Relazione del Metodo*, APF SOCP, *Indie Orientali*, 1723-1725, ff. 21-23. The missionaries in eighteenth century Sichuan distinguished between two types of catechists: [stationary] instructors in matters of faith, as well as ambulant, solitary missionaries. The degree of divergence from the European interpretation of Christianity increased drastically in the latter case. See Léonide Guiot, *La Mission du Su-tchuen au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, p. 311.

<sup>24</sup> This period of (mainly) Protestant missionary activity has been covered in great detail since the middle of the nineteenth century. A comprehensive bibliography can be found in J. G. Lutz, "Chinese Christians and China Missions". For primary sources (available in North America) the most extensive source to date is Archie R. Crouch et al., *Christianity in China: A Scholar's Guide to Resources in Libraries and Archives of the United States*, Armonk and London: M. E. Sharpe 1989.

For insight into one of the most remarkable characters of the "new China mission", see Herman Schlyter, *Karl Gützlaff als Missionar in China*, Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup 1946, his more recent *Der Chinamissionar Karl Gützlaff und seine Heimatbasis*, Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup 1976, as well as Jessie Lutz, "Karl F. A. Gützlaff: Missionary Entrepreneur", in: Suzanne Wilson Barnett and John King

the twentieth century, after incessant warfare, revolutions and de-colonisation had rocked the self-confidence of Christian Europe. For the Catholic church, the Second Vatican Council also entailed a reappraisal of Jesuit accommodation - and went beyond it by accepting the missionary target culture as an equal peer to the occidental tradition. The new missionary policy, referred to as “acculturation” or “inculturation”, was first applied to the former colonies of Africa.<sup>25</sup> Both terms are often used synonymously with “indigenisation”, but is frequently limited to material expressions of socio-cultural contact.<sup>26</sup> Within the Christian context, the Jesuit missiologist Pierre Charles first employed the term “inculturation”, with the Jesuit Joseph Masson using it in a public address immediately preceding the Second Vatican Council.<sup>27</sup> The change in discourse reflects the gradual relocation of Christendom’s centre of gravity away from Europe and the Americas towards the former “Christian colonies”, mainly in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. The intensifying competition with religious contenders, mainly Islam, has also demanded more flexible methods of Christian proselytisation. Interestingly, in China the need for a reorientation of the Christian missionary approach was already the object of theological discourse at the beginning

---

Fairbank, *Christianity in China: Early Protestant Missionary Writings*, Cambridge / Massachusetts and London: Committee on American-East Asian Relations of the Department of History and Council of East Asian Studies / Harvard University 1985, pp. 61-88.

<sup>25</sup> The topic of inculturation in the African churches has been taken up by a number of recent authors, for instance by E. E. Uzukwu, *The Church and Inculturation: The acculturation of Roman Catholicism in Eastern Nigeria*, Uruowulu / Obosi: Pacific College Press 1985 and Eugene Hillman, *Toward an African Christianity: Inculturation Applied*, New York: Paulist Press 1993. Recent publications include Theo Sundermeier, *The Individual and Community in African Traditional Religions*, Hamburg: LIT Verlag 1998, as well as Thomas Spear and Isaria Kimambo, *East African Expressions of Christianity*, Athens / Ohio: Ohio University Press 1999. Overall, however, African civilisations elicited only a fraction of the intellectual, medical and educational enthusiasm which Western missionaries displayed for Asian civilisations. See Andrew F. Walls, “African Christianity in the History of Religions”, in Christopher Fyfe and Andrew Walls (eds), *Christianity in Africa in the 1990s*, Edinburgh: Centre of Asian Studies 1996, pp. 1-2.

<sup>26</sup> Such as the imitation of clothing habits, acquisition of status symbols, or social customs from neighbouring or penetrating cultures. For more information, see Peter Schineller, “Inculturation: A Difficult and Delicate Task”, in: *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, XX-3 (1996), pp. 109-112.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. K. J. Rivinius, “Inkulturation”, p. 688.

of the twentieth century. During the 1920s, the Chinese churches were competing not so much with rival religions but with a tide of secular political ideologies (nationalism, communism). In order to be “part of the flow”, China’s Christians were under pressure to demonstrate their anti-imperialist credentials, as well as to prove that their belief owed more to “Chinese” rather than to “alien” concepts.<sup>28</sup> The churches, in particular those belonging to Protestant denominations but - at grassroots level - also the Catholic church, responded by emphasising their “Chineseness”. The decades in between the May Fourth Movement and the Japanese occupation hence coincided with a policy of ‘indigenisation’: The use of Chinese priests, of Chinese social customs and of the Chinese language all served to attract converts and retain believers in a rapidly changing political environment.<sup>29</sup>

Whereas the early twentieth century witnessed the emergence of increasingly self-confident local churches, Western missionaries were ambivalent in their response. Missionary societies in China - between the Boxer Rebellion (1900) and the conclusion of the Northern Expedition (1927) - transferred the responsibility for the administration of their churches to Chinese nationals. The Vatican established the basis for a thoroughly Chinese hierarchy by appointing six Chinese bishops and by transferring as many dioceses as feasible to indigenous leadership.<sup>30</sup> Most of these

---

<sup>28</sup> Jessie Gregory Lutz, *China and the Christian Colleges 1850-1950*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press 1971 provides a general background. An interesting contemporary source is Zhang Qingshi 张庆世, “Guonei jin shi nian lai zhi zongjiao sichao 国内近十年来的宗教思潮” (“Movements in religious thought in China within the last ten years”), in: *Yanjing huawen xuexiao yan-ke cankao cailiao 燕京大学文科研究所参考材料* (“Reference materials for research and specialised study at the Yanjing Chinese College”), Beijing 1927. It is worth noting that “Chineseness” is used synonymously with “Buddhism” in the pamphlet. See *ibidem*, pamphlet 14 (part III / 三): “Fo-hua jidujiao 佛教化基督教” (“Buddhifying Christianity”).

<sup>29</sup> The defensive reactions to the anti-missionary outbursts of the May Fourth Period is summarised in Cui Dan, *The Cultural Contribution of British Protestant Missionaries*, pp. 132-139 (on medical services) and 300-302 (on social reform).

<sup>30</sup> By 1951, when Communist government measures forced the implementation of self-administration, this process had yielded indigenous administration in 27 out of a total of 44 dioceses. Though far from

“indigenous” churches were located in urban areas and followed the doctrines, liturgies and - often - social conventions of their former missionary teachers.<sup>31</sup> But also in the rural “outstations”, the overall participation of Chinese Christians in the administration of the churches increased markedly.<sup>32</sup> During the republican period, movements such as the True Jesus Church, the Little Flock, the Jesus Family and Wang Mingdao’s Christian cult captured a growing proportion of China’s religious population.<sup>33</sup> In a way, the formation of these new churches could be regarded as the ultimate success of the missionary effort. Missionary fears of uncontrollable syncretism were, however, reignited when such indigenous expressions of Christianity began to attract members of established missionary churches.<sup>34</sup> This was particularly the case for the True Jesus Church (*Zhen Yesujiao* 真耶穌教會), founded by Barnabas Dong in Beijing in 1917,<sup>35</sup> as well as of the Little Flock (*Xiao qun*

---

complete, this number encompassed the majority of China’s Catholic population. See C. Cary-Elwes, *China and the Cross*, pp. 240-242.

<sup>31</sup> Whereas by the 1920s Roman Catholic missions were distributed relatively evenly throughout the countryside and tended to be content to limit their activities to internal social issues, the Protestant churches were striving to become actively involved in the socio-political issues of the Republic. Concentrated in the metropolises of the eastern provinces, the Protestant missions thus competed directly with the increasingly radicalised intellectuals of urban China. See Yip Ka-che, *The Anti-Christian Movement in China*, pp. 16, 26 and 113.

<sup>32</sup> See John K. Fairbank, “The Place of Protestant Writings in China’s Cultural History”, in: Barnett and Fairbank, *Christianity in China*, pp. 7-13. The growing involvement of local Christians can also be attributed to the increasingly successful campaign against Opium consumption. See Kathleen L. Lodwick, *Crusaders against Opium: Protestant Missionaries in China, 1874-1917*, Lexington / Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky 1995, pp. 53 and 66-67.

<sup>33</sup> For a summary of these movements (and a detailed analysis of the Little Flock in particular), see Norman Howard Cliff, “The Life and Theology of Watchman Nee, including a Study of the Little Flock movement which he founded”, MPhil dissertation, Open University 1983 (UMI print), pp. 62-77.

<sup>34</sup> Despite the contemporary policies of indigenisation, the established churches feared the influence of traditional Chinese religion(s) within the new Christian movements. Jing Dianying, founder of the Jesus Family, for instance, had been an ardent Buddhist. See *ibidem*, pp. 66-71.

<sup>35</sup> The movement owed its origins to the Pentecostal revival among the Chinese Christians of Los Angeles around 1906. For a general discussion, see Bob Whyte, *Unfinished Encounter - China and Christianity*, London: Collins 1988. For more information on the True Jesus Church, see Allen J. Swanson and Grace Lo, *The Church in Taiwan: Profile 1980 - A Review of the Past, A Projection for the Future*, Pasadena: William Carey Library 1981, pp. 76-79.

□□□□□) founded in Fuzhou around 1928 by Li Duosheng (Ni To Sheng, *alias* “Watchman Nee”).<sup>36</sup>

Whereas contemporary Western Christianity - including Roman Catholicism - has adopted a generally favourable attitude towards the phenomenon of inculturation, many leading clerics seem to regard it as a “necessity” rather than a desirable state of affairs. The Vatican’s guardian of orthodoxy, the International Theological Commission, stated as recently as 1987 that the interpenetration of Christianity and pre-existing cultural environments was to be welcomed, provided that the latter were “compatible with the Gospel”.<sup>37</sup> Previous papal pronouncements, such as the encyclica *Slavorum Apostoli*,<sup>38</sup> went even further, by suggesting that inculturation was a process of mutual transformation, thus forcing aspects of Christianity to undergo a certain degree of change. While the Vatican has encouraged African and Asian clerics to assume important functions in the central church hierarchy, undisclosed suspicion persists in both hemispheres of the Catholic world: European clerics are loth to see the rites introduced by Western missionaries “corrupted” by localised pagan traditions, and many members of congregations in the former colonies mistrust the sudden tolerance of their former masters.<sup>39</sup> Earlier experiments with independent expressions of Christianity had ended in acrimony, such as in the Kingdom of Kongo, under the

---

<sup>36</sup> For a detailed analysis of the Assembly Hall Church (Little Flock) see Norman Howard Cliff, “The Life and Theology of Watchman Nee”, in particular pp. 31-44. The hostile reaction of the Communist administration in China is reported in Dorothy A. Raber, *Protestantism in Changing Taiwan: A Call to Creative Response*, Pasadena: William Carey Library 1978, p. 189 ff.

<sup>37</sup> After Fiona Bowie, “The Inculturation Debate in Africa”, pp. 70-71.

<sup>38</sup> “Apostles of the Slavs”, in honour of the Christianisation of early mediaeval Slavonic Europe. Cf. F. Bowie, “The Inculturation Debate in Africa”, p. 71 ff.

<sup>39</sup> Such “African” traditions include the identification (cultic and linguistic) of the Christian god with pagan deities, this-worldly orientation of prayer, ancestor veneration, charismatic spirituality, witchcraft and miraculous healing. See Andrew Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, pp. 4-6, 8-10 and 13-14. See also Theo Sundermeier, *The Individual and Community in African Traditional Religions*, pp. 120-136 (ancestor cult) and 198-205 (divination and medicine), as well as G. C. Oosthuizen, *The Healer-Prophet in Afro-Christian Churches*, Leiden, Boston and Cologne: E. J. Brill 1992.

rule of a Christian dynasty which had received its theological training in Portugal during the early sixteenth century. The Counter-Reformation bestowed the Catholic world with a siege mentality, while at the Council of Trent the Latin rite and the contemporary European version of Christianity were enshrined as the ultimate matrix for all proselytisation. The influence of extra-European culture on the missionary movement were from now on regarded as “extra-Christian”. The experience of the Kingdom of Kongo was seen as evidence by proponents of Eurocentrism of the dangers of “inculturation” - indiscriminate, unsupervised intermingling of cultural and religious traditions.<sup>40</sup>

### **3. “Inculturation” - *a universal phenomenon***

This thesis assumes that inculturation takes place even if the visiting culture proves antagonistic to change. Patterns illustrating the inculturation of Christianity in China become apparent when examining the stages of its entire history. Factors, such as religious and philosophical traditions, social customs and the use of language dictated the degree of alteration of the original Christian message during its transmission. The first Jews who adopted Jesus as their spiritual master did so within their own “Jewish” understanding of the universe, whereas Greeks and the Hellenised peoples along the shores of the Mediterranean embraced Christianity as an extension of their own cultural and philosophical identity.<sup>41</sup> The Romans had been attracted to oriental cults ever since their legions established bases in Mesopotamia and in Egypt. The thought of having to surrender their identity as members of a superior civilisation

---

<sup>40</sup> Aspects of inculturation extended from social organisation to definitions, respect and fear of the metaphysical. Cf. J. Thornton, “The Development of an African Catholic Church in the Kingdom of Kongo, 1491-1750”, in: *Journal of African History*, XXV-2 (1984), pp. 147-167.

<sup>41</sup> This chapter of Christianity’s inculturation receives special attention in X. Wang, *Christianity and Imperial Culture*, p. 230 ff.

to the mores of an alien cult would have caused consternation. Mystical cults were expected to contribute a spiritual quality to the lives of Roman citizens, without forcing them to change their customs. Christianity was in this respect merely more exclusive than other cults, in its refusal to accept any other gods or divine leaders.<sup>42</sup> Wherever the legionaries took the new religion, the local populations would regard Christianity as a “Roman” cult and interpret it within their own mental universe. of the local populations.<sup>43</sup> Following Christianity’s expansion beyond the borders of the Roman empire, most Slavic churches established their own, national rites, following the example of the Byzantine papacy. Within the Germanic world, however, a more ambivalent system of worship emerged, often leaving native patterns of popular religiosity intact while superimposing Latinised rites. It is therefore hardly surprising that the vernacularising objectives of the Reformation first took root in Northern Europe.<sup>44</sup> A certain bipolarity of elite and popular religion could, however, also be observed in the “ancient” Christian heartland of the Mediterranean, which led to several evangelical campaigns during the Middle Ages and the Counter-Reformation.<sup>45</sup>

Outside Europe, the ancient churches of northern Africa, the Middle East and India developed separate, localised Christian identities from the very beginning. The

---

<sup>42</sup> See, for instance, Georg Schöllgen, “Die Teilnahme der Christen am städtischen Leben in vorkonstantinischer Zeit”, in: Jochen Martin and Barbara Quint (eds), *Christentum und antike Gesellschaft*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 1990, pp. 319-357.

<sup>43</sup> For insight into the interpretations taking place within their respective intellectual elites, see Winfried Daut, “Die ‘Halben Christen’ unter den Konvertiten und Gebildeten des 4. und 5. Jahrhunderts”, in: *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft*, LV (1971), pp. 171-188.

<sup>44</sup> See, for a general introduction, Benedicta Ward and G. R. Evans, “The Medieval West”, in: Adrian Hastings (ed.), *A World History of Christianity*, London: Cassell 1999, pp. 111-118.

<sup>45</sup> Quite rightly, Robert Gimello cautions readers - albeit in very different cultural parameters - not to impose artificial parameters when studying traditional societies. See Robert M. Gimello, “Chang Shang-Ying on Wu-T’ai Shan”, in: Susan Naquin and Chü-fang Yü (eds), *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites*, p. 90.

Ethiopian church preserved rites imbued with shamanistic symbolism.<sup>46</sup> The Coptic communities along the Nile combined ancient Egyptian, Jewish and Greek elements.<sup>47</sup> In historic Syria, a variety of churches preserved their own separate traditions,<sup>48</sup> whereas Iraq's Mandaean continued to worship the life-endowing forces of the Tigris and the Euphrates within a changed theological context.<sup>49</sup> Meanwhile, on the other side of the Indian Ocean, the Malabar Christians of Kerala, presumed followers of St Thomas, established patterns of Christian ritual that transcended the cultic differences between Hindu religion and Christianity.<sup>50</sup> Elsewhere in India, Catholicism was being spread by European "gurus", experimenting with diverse methods of proselytisation.<sup>51</sup>

The constant and cumulative inculturation of Christianity gathered pace when its missionaries reached civilisations which had only recently been brought into contact with Europe: The Americas, sub-Saharan Africa, India and eastern Asia. Pre-

---

<sup>46</sup> Personified in the role of the *dabteras*, unordained chanters, exorcists and healers. See Aymro Wondmagegnehu and Joachim Motovu, *The Ethiopian Orthodox Church*, Addis Ababa: Ethiopian Orthodox Mission 1970, p. 140 and Aziz Suryad Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, Millwood / New York: Kraus Reprints 1980, pp. 147-151, for a brief historical survey. The orthodox church is also referred to as the (Ethiopian) Coptic church (see also the following note).

<sup>47</sup> The word "Copt" is at the root of the name of ancient Egypt. Coptic Egyptians therefore have regarded themselves as the inheritors of both a pre-Arab and pre-Islamic Egyptian civilisation. See Wilfred C. Griggs, *Early Egyptian Christianity - From its Origins to 451 C. E.*, Leiden: E. J. Brill 1990. A detailed anthology of church legends can be found in Walter Curt Till, *Koptische Heiligen- und Märtyrerlegenden: Texte, Übersetzungen und Indices*, Rome: Pont. Inst. Orientalium Studiorum 1935/36.

<sup>48</sup> A representative of the Syrian churches are the Maronite Christians, who form a large proportion of Lebanon's population. See Seely J. Beggiani, *Early Syriac Theology: With Special Reference to the Maronite Tradition*, Lanham / Maryland: University Press of America 1983. The new *Blackwell Dictionary of Eastern Christianity*, Ken Perry, John Hinnells et al. (eds), Oxford: Blackwell 1999 provides valuable information in encyclopaedic form.

<sup>49</sup> For a systematic introduction, see E. S. Stevens, *The Mandaean of Iraq and Iran: Their Cults, Customs, Magic, Legends and Folklore*, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1937.

<sup>50</sup> The library of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, has a Mass in Latin for the Malabar Rites of the year 1609 - obviously the outcome of a 'Christian-Christian encounter'. For an outline history of the "Thomas Christians" of Kerala, see Eugène Tisserant, *Eastern Christianity in India: A History of the Syro-Malabar Church from the Earliest Time to the Present Day*, Bombay / Calcutta / Madras: Orient Longmans 1957. See also Sita Ram Goel, *History of Hindu-Christian Encounter*, New Delhi: Voice of India 1989 for a more systematic analysis. An example of contemporary inculturation is presented in the article by Francis Jayapathy, "Mukkuvar Catholicism", in: Th. Bamat and J.-P. Wiest (eds), *Popular Catholicism in a World Church*, pp. 183-214 (in particular pp. 198-207, on the polarity of public and private expressions of Christian thought).



Christian beliefs in the power of the ancestors, of shamans, witches and healers, as well as of spirits controlling the cycles of life and agriculture, would gradually merge with the doctrines of Christianity, and soon follow the example of the Christian symbiosis with Roman and Greek concepts at the very beginning of Christendom's development.<sup>52</sup> A continuation of this phenomenon was hence only to be expected when Christianity was introduced to the population of China.

---

<sup>51</sup> This, of course, mainly refers to the Jesuit accommodationists around Roberto Nobili. See Cathérine Cornille, *The Guru in Indian Catholicism - Ambiguity or Opportunity of Inculturation?*, Louvain: Peeters Press 1991.

<sup>52</sup> A detailed analysis of the "pagan-Christian" synthesis in southern Africa can be found in Bengt G. M. Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*, London: Lutterworth Press 1948 and Berthold Adolf Pauw, *Religion in a Tswana Chieftdom*, Westport / Connecticut: Greenwood Press 1985 (originally published in 1960 by the International African Institute). Pauw concludes, pp. 5-12 and 238, that Christianity had largely *supplanted* the previous magico-religious system, but not without a simultaneous process of "mutual influence", expressed in the survival of certain rituals and metaphysical concepts. The ancestor cult was hence part of a divine duty to look after the 'wellbeing' of the ancestors' souls. See *ibidem*, pp. 215-216 and 249-251. On the same topic see also Charles Nyamiti, *Christ as our Ancestor: Christology from an African Perspective*, Gweru / Zimbabwe: Mambo Press 1984, pp. 35-38. For a contemporary example from South America, see María José Caram, "The Shape of Catholic Identity among the Aymara of Pilcuyo", in: Bamat and Wiest, *Popular Catholicism in a World Church*, pp. 56-86.

#### 4. Japan's "Hidden Christians"

Having established their missionary headquarters for the Eastern Mission in Goa, the Jesuits attempted to cast their net to the farthest corner of the known East: Japan. First contacts were made in August 1549, when the Navarran Jesuit Francis Xavier (1506-1552) touched firm ground at Kagoshima, accompanied by the first Japanese convert - Yajiro, a samurai who had escaped to Malacca on board a Portuguese ship five years earlier.<sup>53</sup> The Jesuit mission in nearby Nagasaki swiftly gained in popularity, producing crowds of converts and stimulating the curiosity of non-religious onlookers.<sup>54</sup> Owing to the complications of the contemporary political situation, the mass conversions quickly acquired a relevance surpassing the purely religious. The latter half of the sixteenth century was characterised by an increasingly violent struggle for supremacy among Japan's regional warlords, the *daimyo* □□□□. One such daimyo, Oda Nobunaga (1535-1582), amassed a huge following among Japan's Christians, and - greatly aided by European guns imported by his Jesuit allies - was preparing to utilise his "Christian battalions" in order to eliminate all contenders.<sup>55</sup> The bitter warfare reached its end when Hideyoshi established his rule after Nobunaga's assassination in 1582. Hideyoshi (1536-1600) regarded the Christian missionaries with increasing suspicion, in particular since the Spanish and Portuguese were swiftly expanding their military and commercial presence throughout eastern

---

<sup>53</sup> See Stephen Turnbull, *The Kakure Kirishitan of Japan*, p. 28 ff. Also Ann M. Harrington, *Japan's Hidden Christians*, Chicago: Loyola University Press 1993, pp. 3-5. For a more extensive bibliography, see Johannes Laures, *Kirishitan Bunko: A Manual of Books and Documents on the Early Christian Mission in Japan*, Monumenta Nipponica Monographs V, Tokyo: Sophia University Press 1957.

<sup>54</sup> For a detailed account of the very beginnings of missionary activity in Japan, see Charles Ralph Boxer, *The Christian Century in Japan, 1549-1650*, Berkeley / Los Angeles: University of California Press and London: Cambridge University Press 1951, pp. 36-40 and 95-104.

<sup>55</sup> See M. Steichen, *The Christian Daimyos: A Century of Religious and Political History in Japan (1549-1650)*, Tokyo: Rikkyo Gakuin Press [1903], pp. 49-58, as well as pp. 78-80 on Nobunaga's death.

Asia.<sup>56</sup> Official reprisals and an overall tendency to contain the Christian mission in Japan without seeking to eliminate it completely were the consequence of Hideyoshi's apprehension. His successor Hideyori attempted to retain his father's political authority, but quickly found himself confronted with the formidable fighting force of Ieyasu Tokugawa. The decisive battle of Sekigahara (21 October 1600), between the followers of the Tokugawa clan and the - mostly Christian - defenders of Hideyori, was followed by the establishment of the Tokugawa shogunate in 1603 - a major event in Japanese history, forcing all remaining rivals to swear loyalty to the new rulers or face the consequences. Though initially tolerant of Christianity in general and supportive of Christian warlords in particular, the Tokugawa shogunate came to view affiliation to Christianity as a sign of disloyalty, following the increasing Buddhist fervour of Ieyasu towards the end of his life. Ieyasu's hardening attitude towards Christianity combined with the imprudent behaviour of foreigners within Japan and along its coastal shores, produced the edict of 27 January 1614.<sup>57</sup> Opposition by Christian daimyos and - crucially - the peasant uprising of 1638 triggered an instant and violent repression which annihilated all but tiny pockets of Christian communities and which closed off Japan from all but the most essential contacts with the outside world.<sup>58</sup> Christians who decided to remain loyal to their ancestral beliefs now faced the bitter alternative of either publicly renouncing their faith, by trampling a crucifix

---

<sup>56</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 77-78, 82-85, 86-96 and 141-157 on the crucial stages of Hashiba [Toyotomi] Hideyoshi's military and political career. Hideyoshi's malconceived campaign against Korea (and hence the Ming) as well as his end are covered on pp. 210-214.

<sup>57</sup> Full translation of the edict in Steichen, *The Christian Daimyos*, pp. 273-277. The edict of 1614 is also referred to in A. Harrington, *Japan's Hidden Christians*, p. 26 ff.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 297-310 (Hideyori's resistance) and pp. 329-342 (Shimabara rebellion). The political repercussions - i.e. Hideyoshi's reactions - against Japan's Christians are illustrated in George Ellison, *Deus Destroyed*, pp. 109-141. See also C. R. Boxer, *The Christian Century in Japan*, pp. 389-397 and Ohashi Yukihiro, "New Perspectives on the Early Tokugawa Persecution", in John Breen and Mark Williams (eds), *Japan and Christianity - Impacts and Responses*, Basingstoke / England: Macmillan Press 1996, pp. 46-62

or icon, or drastic punishment.<sup>59</sup> Thus forced into an underground existence, Japan's "hidden Christians" held out in more than a dozen localities in Japan's outlying districts.<sup>60</sup> During the centuries of enforced secrecy, the ritual aspects of Japanese Christianity underwent a process of inculturation, which centred on the inclusion of local animistic beliefs as well as elements of Buddhism. Curiously, though fully autonomous in every other regard, the "hidden Christians" seemed aware of the fact that they were priestless, and hence unable to perform the sacraments.<sup>61</sup> Though church elders took over many of the ritual functions within their communities, they could not absolve believers and consequently not offer the Eucharist. Instead, believers turned directly to Mary to intercede.<sup>62</sup> Converts were frequently torn

---

<sup>59</sup> This public act, referred to as *fumi-e* 踏み絵, was part of the Tokugawa's policy to force all Christian households to renounce Christianity by registering with a Buddhist temple. See Stephen Turnbull, *The Kakure Kirishitan of Japan*, p. 41 ff. See also G. Elison, *Deus Destroyed*, pp. 204-207 for this and other examples of techniques intended to lead to apostasy.

<sup>60</sup> The fate of Japan's "hidden Christians" during the Tokugawa period has produced an academic curiosity in the West out of proportion with the Christian community's size or importance, and maybe comparable to the Western interest in the Kaifeng Jews in China. Articles were first published by astonished Westerners who arrived after the forced opening of Japan in 1853. The community's historical development is reflected in the terminology used: initially referred to as "secret Christians" (*senpuku kirishitan* 隠し切支丹), owing to their reclusive existence in face of ubiquitous persecution, an autonomous sense of religious identity was reached by the end of the prohibition of Christianity in Japan (1873). This autonomy is generally expressed through the term "hidden" (*kakure* 隠れ) to signify "secret" Christians who decided to remain separate from the newly introduced church structures after 1873. The changes in terminology are analysed in Stephen Turnbull, *The Kakure Kirishitan of Japan*, pp. 1-3. In English, the term "crypto-Christianity" is equally well established. For a case study on the *kakure kirishitan* in the outlying island of Ikitsuki 隠岐, see William D. Bray, "The Hidden Christians of Ikitsuki Island", in: *The Japan Christian Quarterly*, 26 (1960), pp. 76-84. The case is also covered in A. M. Harrington, *Japan's Hidden Christians*, pp. 42 ff.

<sup>61</sup> The Jesuit missionaries had created a three-tiered structure, which divided the Japanese church (circa 120,000 members by 1574) into "catechists" (*dojuku*, circa 260 by 1604), "brothers" (*iruman*, mostly European, but including circa 70 Japanese in 1592) and "fathers" (*bateren*, only two Japanese by 1603), the latter two terms having been derived from the Portuguese. Whereas Japanese Christians were encouraged to join the first two categories from the very beginning of the Jesuit mission, the "Japano-sceptical" attitude during the visitorship of Francisco Cabral (1528-1609) prevented Japanese nationals from becoming *bateren*, and therefore to administer the sacraments. The three-fold appointment of the accommodationist Alessandro Valignano as the official visitor to the Japan mission (1579-1582, 1590-92 and 1598-1603) overturned this unwritten rule, although the increasing pressure on the Christian communities as well as an inherent reluctance from the part of many European priests kept the number of Japanese priests at a bare minimum. See C. R. Boxer, *The Christian Century in Japan*, pp. 211-212, and J. F. Schütte / J. Coyne, *Valignano's Mission Principles for Japan*, Part I, pp. 200-203, and Part II, *The Solution (1580-1582)*, pp. 281-299.

<sup>62</sup> A fact also related to the increased veneration of Mary during the period of Japan's exposure to Catholic Christianity, the Counter-Reformation. See Stephen Turnbull, *Devotion to Mary among the*

between adherence to the traditional spirits and those of the Christian creed.<sup>63</sup> In aspects crucial to the self-understanding of the Japanese, such as the strong bonds which link the individual to family and country, Japanese Christianity soon underwent a process of profound inculturation.<sup>64</sup> The iconography and ritual of the Hidden Christians reflected this process: Depictions of Christ and of the saints soon acquired Asiatic features, whereas patterns from Japanese mythology began to permeate *kakure* legends of saints and miracles. Rapid Japanification during the first decades of the anti-Christian edicts can of course also be explained as attempts to mislead prosecuting officials, by making Christian cultic objects visibly almost impossible to separate from Shinto and Buddhist ones. Nevertheless, the underground communities found it necessary to take the greatest caution to conceal such objects from the eyes of curious - and potentially dangerous - onlookers.<sup>65</sup>

While this Asian facet was being added to the history of Christianity, similar developments were taking place hundreds of kilometres further west. The European missionaries who had set out to convert the Japanese soon began to make preparations

---

*Hidden Christians of Japan*, Wallington / England: The Ecumenical Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary 1993, pp. 15-16. And see Léonide Guiot, *La Mission du Su-tchuen au XVIII<sup>me</sup> siècle*, p. 173 for the example of the Mgr Pottier as a devotional follower of the Virgin.

<sup>63</sup> No more so than at the our of death: In his last gasps, an old convert gathered all his strength and exclaimed the name of the local deity *Tenbo*. A bystanding Christian admonished his confrère to shout the word *deus* instead, which the latter compliantly did. During his last hours, the old man interchanged the names of both gods freely, while the other Christian watched out for breaches of Christian doctrine in the final prayers. The convert ended his earthly existence with a Christian rosary around his neck and the words of the pagan god on his lips. See Antonio Sisto Rosso, *Apostolic Legations to China of the Eighteenth Century*, South Pasadena: Perkins 1948, p. 96.

<sup>64</sup> Expounded, using the example of the *gozensama* □□□□□ and of Shinto traditions of *kami* □□, in Stephen Turnbull, *The Kakure Kirishitan of Japan*, pp. 104-110. Briefly referred to in A. Harrington, *Japan's Hidden Christians*, pp. 133-137. The same point was forcefully made by Turnbull, *The Kakure Kirishitan of Japan*, pp. 111-137, where the transformation of martyr graves into Shinto shrines is analysed. The interaction of Christianity with traditional Japanese culture in a more modern setting has, for instance, been analysed in J. F. Howes, "Japan's Christians and the State", in: Steven Kaplan (ed.), *Indigenisation - Responses to Western Christianity*, New York: New York University Press 1995, pp. 75-95.

<sup>65</sup> Artfully crafted cavities in beams and pillars became a frequent hiding place. For more information on Christian responses to the Tokugawa inquisition (the *shumon-aratame yaku* □□□□□□□□), see Stephen Turnbull, *The Kakure Kirishitan of Japan*, pp. 45-49. The photographic plates between pp.

to become active in the Ming empire, refining the missionary techniques developed in India and Japan. In the following paragraph, the cultural parameters of late imperial China will be briefly presented as the most important hurdle facing the Christian missionaries. These parameters would ultimately also determine the inculturation of Christianity into a recognisably Chinese expression of religiosity.

---

148 and 149 clearly illustrate the artistic and ritual inculturation which had occurred within popular Japanese Christianity.

### Chapter 3: The evolution of Chinese Christianity

#### 1. *The role of religion in Chinese popular culture*

Akin to the ancient civilisations of the Mediterranean, the main themes that recur in early Chinese mythology find their origin in the primaeval experience of human beings struggling with nature for subsistence.<sup>1</sup> The creative forces of nature are expressed in the desire to multiply, both referring to the human community and to its livestock; this desire is counteracted by phenomena of death and mutilation - all of which require explanations surpassing the immediate natural reality.<sup>2</sup> Despite this common basis, Han culture differs from other civilisations in the role allocated to religion.<sup>3</sup> The very first hurdle for the Christian missionary in China was the absence of a commonly accepted creation myth. Instead, a number of traditions explain the inception of “civilisation”: The refinement of food, irrigation, architecture and the invention of a writing system - all characteristics which, in their collective imagination, set the Han apart from their neighbours.<sup>4</sup> Another stumbling block was the absence of a monotheistic tradition; recognised supreme deities from Chinese antiquity, such as “Heaven” *tian* 天,<sup>5</sup> or the “Supreme Lord” *shangdi* 上帝,<sup>6</sup> were

---

<sup>1</sup> Eloquently introduced in Cl. Lévi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked*, Chicago: Chicago University Press 1983. See also C. K. Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society*, p. 66 ff.

<sup>2</sup> See Henri Maspero, *Le Taoïsme et les religions chinoises*, Paris: Gallimard 1971, pp. 7-86.

<sup>3</sup> *Zongjiao* 宗教, the term currently used for “religion”, is a nineteenth century loan from the Japanese (pronounced *shukyo*, literally “ancestral teachings” - or maybe “teaching of the orthodox”). See K. Dean, *Lord of the Three in One*, p. 10, footnote 8. For a systematic analysis of religious life in China, see Hans Küng and Julia Ching, *Christianity and Chinese Religions*, New York and London: Doubleday 1989, in particular pp. 3-5. See also p. 265, footnote 29 of this thesis.

<sup>4</sup> See the *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 - translated and edited by Tchang Fou-jouei, as *Initiation à la langue classique chinoise à partir de trois chapitres les plus représentatifs du Hanfeizi*, Paris: Librairie You-feng 1987, chapter “Wudu” 五蠹 (“The five vermin”), pp. 44-181 - for such elements of perceived cultural and civilisational superiority.

<sup>5</sup> Christian hopes of missionary victory centred upon the presumption that the “Ruler of Heaven” (*tianzhu* 天主) of ancient Confucianism could soon be substituted by the Judeo-Christian “God”. Such hopes were nourished by successful intellectual encounters during the early period of the Jesuit presence in China, when several scholar officials began to integrate Christian notions of deity into pre-existing Confucian patterns of thought. See Benjamin A. Elman, *Classicism, Politics, and Kinship: The Ch’ang-chou School of New Text Confucianism in Late Imperial China*, Berkeley / Los Angeles /

either too abstract for the understanding of the general population, or too concretely restricted to the realm of agriculture (as in the cults of “Lord Millet” *houjif* 后稷 and of “Uncle Soil” *tubo* 土伯). The traditional gods were far from being almighty. Their influence definitely did not extend into the subterranean quarters where the souls of the dead are guarded over by the “Earth Official” *tuguan* 土官, popularly worshipped during the late imperial period. Dominated by rivers - specifically the Yellow River and the Yangtse - the river gods were seen simultaneously as the providers of livelihood and the source of tremendous destructive forces.<sup>7</sup> Gods and spirits inhabited every niche of China’s agrarian society. The lack of a common mythological matrix hence required a far greater willingness to “adapt” Christian teachings to local Chinese traditions than in missionary regions adjacent to the Christian West. Confident of belonging to a superior civilisation, Han converts interpreted the missionaries’ message as compatible with their own traditions, and within their own reference framework. The parameters for Christianity’s inculturation were hence set from the very beginning of missiological intercourse.

By the end of the imperial period, the vast number of spiritual beings venerated by the Chinese peasantry had been hierarchised into one pantheon of gods, spirits, saints, immortalised heroes and venerated humans.<sup>8</sup> The compatibility of

---

Oxford: University of California Press 1990, pp. 90-91 and 140-141 on the influence of such Christian concepts on the nascent New Text tradition of Confucianism.

<sup>6</sup> See Gunnar Sjöholm (ed.), *Readings in Mo Ti, Chapters XXVI-XXVIII: On the Will of Heaven*, Helsingborg: Plus Ultra 1982, in particular pp. 98-99 (on *tian* 天, *di* 地 and *shang* [di] 上帝). The ruler is hence both sacrificing high-priest and sacrificial object, ready to be given up for the greater good if he has transgressed against celestial principles. See also Hans Küng and Julia Ching, *Christianity and Chinese Religions*, pp. 24-26.

<sup>7</sup> The Lord of the River *Hebo* 河伯 demanded in a yearly sacrificial rite a virgin girl from the villagers inhabiting the banks of the Yellow River. These would watch in awe as the bed tied to their sacrificial daughter was carried away, until the fluvial lord had embraced her in his cold arms. See Maspero, *Le Taoïsme et les religions chinoises*, p. 16.

<sup>8</sup> Or maybe rather a *pandemonium*, owing to the scepticism of the Chinese peasant towards any one god in particular. A model outlining hierarchies within popular worship (and communal action) can be found in David K. Jordan, *Gods, Ghosts, and Ancestors - The Folk Religion of a Taiwanese Village*,



Buddhism with the “polydemonistic” imagination of the populace is astonishing: Despite the constant emphasis on the *abstract* nature of the Buddha (the “One Face of the Thousand Buddhas”, *qianfo yimian* 千佛一面), the people enthusiastically venerated the *appearances* of the spiritual power supportive of Buddhism as protective spiritual beings.<sup>9</sup> The worship of concrete spirits also facilitated a fraternisation with Daoistic patron saints.<sup>10</sup> Would eighteenth-century Catholicism - with its legion of patron saints, martyrs and beatified clerics - follow suit and become the focus of popular worship? The following section will seek to shed light on the interaction of popular religion with “missionary imports”, both in terms of missionary techniques and of indigenous responses.

---

Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press 1972, p. 171. Jordan complemented his study together with Daniel Overmyer with *The Flying Phoenix: Aspects of Chinese Sectarianism in Taiwan*, Princeton: Princeton University Press 1986. See also the review article by Timothy Barrett, “History Writing and Spirit Writing in Seventeenth Century China”, in: *Modern Asian Studies* XXIII-3 (July 1989), pp. 601-608.

For more details on the inhabitants of the Chinese pan-demonium, see Hou Jie 侯洁 and Fan Lizhu 樊丽珠, *Zhongguo minzhong zongjiao yishi* 中国民间宗教仪式 “Concepts of Popular Chinese Religion”, Tianjin: *Tianjin renmin chubanshe* 天津人民出版社 1994, pp. 138 ff. and 172 ff. Also Clarence B. Day: *Chinese Peasant Cults - Being a Study of Chinese Paper Gods*, Shanghai, Hong Kong and Singapore 1940 (appendix), and of course the entire *Fengshen yanyi* 封神演义. For a modern reprint, see Xu Zhonglin 徐宗林, *Fengshen yanyi* 封神演义, Shanghai: *Shanghai guji chubanshe* 上海古籍出版社 1991.

<sup>9</sup> This includes divine beings at a lower level of spirituality, such as the *pusa* 菩萨, “Bodhisattvas” *luohan* 罗汉, “High Priests” *gaoseng* 高僧 and the “celestial spirits”, *tianshen* 天神. For further details, see Hou Jie and Fan Lizhu, *Zhongguo minzhong zongjiao yishi*, pp. 145-148. See also Vladimir Vyacheslavovich Malyavin, “Zhongguo minjian zongjiao qushi” 中国民间宗教趋势 (“Trends in Chinese Popular Religion”) in: *Shijie zongjiao yanjiu* 世界宗教研究, 1/1994, pp. 122-124.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Qing Xitai 清溪台 and Tang Dachao 唐大潮, *Daojiaoshi* 道教史 (“History of Daoism”), Beijing: *Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe* 中国社会科学出版社 1994, as well as Kristofer Marinus Schipper, “Sources of Modern Popular Worship in the Taoist Canon”, in: *Proceedings of the “International Conference on Popular Beliefs and Chinese Culture”* 国际民间信仰与中国文化国际学术研讨会论文集, Taipei: *Hanxue yanjiu zhongxin* 汉学研究中心 1994, volume I, pp. 1-23.

## **2. Missionary traditions: Buddhists, Nestorians, Catholics**

The first Catholic emissary to arrive in China was the Franciscan Giovanni da Montecorvino, residing at the Mongol court in Dadu (Beijing) between 1298 and 1318.<sup>11</sup> Though his mission proved ephemeral, it was typical of a long tradition of hospitality towards emissaries of foreign religious thought. Already during the Han period (207 BC - 220 AD), when the first missionaries of Buddhism crossed the Himalayas from India, the population of the Han empire found itself confronted with unfamiliar spiritual concepts.<sup>12</sup> The new philosophy was initially predominant among the social elite, who had embraced Buddhism as spiritual solace in times of dire circumstances: While the Han empire was disintegrating, rational Confucian doctrine no longer seemed to provide answers to the fundamental problems of life. In the communities of rural China, Daoist cults had culminated in millenarian movements, often with complex organisational patterns. Following the end of the Han, popular religiosity increasingly embraced elements of Buddhist teaching - at times encouraged by Buddhist missionaries, at times absorbed through the medium of converts, who proffered their own interpretation of Buddhist principles. There were considerable barriers to the introduction of Buddhism in China, including the most fundamental problem - language. Within a short period of time, the Buddhist missionaries from the Subcontinent had mastered sufficient Chinese to engage in a meaningful dialogue with the local population. But the problem of conveying concepts which were alien to Han culture required a heightened sense of ingenuity; borrowing pre-existing terminology,

---

<sup>11</sup> Most historical accounts of Christianity in China - bar those focusing on Nestorianism - begin with this mission. The reference tool for (Catholic) missionaries and missions between 1307 (Montecorvino made archbishop of the Yuan capital) and the beginning of the republican period is Joseph de Moidrey, *La Hiérarchie Catholique en Chine, en Corée et au Japon (1307-1914)*, Xujiahui [Zi-Ka-Wei] / Shanghai: Imprimerie de l'orphelinat de T'ou-sè-wè 1914. See also P. S. Hsiang, *The Catholic Missions in China during the Middle Ages, 1294-1368*, Cleveland / Ohio: Zubaal 1984.

from Daoist sources and other traditions, undoubtedly brought connotations which transformed the original meaning significantly. The same process, on the other hand, would also alter the understanding of the loan words themselves. A Daoist term, for instance, once it had been generally accepted in its new Buddhist connotation, would never be confined to its exclusively Daoist sense any more.<sup>13</sup> This would invariably lead to conflict with the representatives of established religious systems, who would launch a “counter-offensive” against aspects deemed incompatible with or offensive to their tradition. Religious elements acceptable to a small number of converts from among the social elite - such as celibacy, transcendentalism and the neglect of physical well-being - would become marginalised or even eradicated in the transition to popular Buddhist practice. Less radical stipulations, such as fasting and vegetarianism, were accepted by a smaller margin, whereas those elements most akin to contemporary thought were quickly incorporated into existing patterns of religious life.<sup>14</sup> This was particularly true for the millenarian tendencies which erupted at regular intervals during the course of China’s imperial history, threatening the stability of the ruling dynasties. Though differing through time and local tradition, the beginning of a glorious new era, preceded by the destruction of the present world, would be heralded by the arrival of the Maitreya Buddha. The Maitreya figure is regarded as the successor to the Sakyamuni Buddha (*Shijiamuni-fo* □□□□□□□□), ruler over the present world, and is also known as the

---

<sup>12</sup> See Erik Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China - the Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Mediaeval China*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1959.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. James Huntley Grayson, *Early Buddhism and Christianity in Korea - A Study in the Implantation of Religion*, Leiden: E. J. Brill 1985, in particular pp. 13 ff. and 140-143. After establishing some general observations concerning the inculturation of religious systems, Grayson demonstrates that Christianity spread through Korean society in a fashion analogous to Buddhism many centuries earlier.

<sup>14</sup> This is not the place for a full account of Buddhism’s development in imperial China. For a concise introduction to popular Buddhism during the later imperial period, see Daniel Overmyer, *Folk Buddhist*

“Compassionate Buddha” (*Mile-fo* 彌勒佛), the “Buddha of the Future” (*Weilai-fo* 未來佛) and ruler over the “Western World of Ultimate Bliss” (*Xifang jileshijie* 西方極樂世界).<sup>15</sup> Maitreyan cults gradually absorbed most existing Daoist movements, with the effect that by the beginning of the Ming-Qing period Buddhism and Daoism were largely identical at a popular level. Inculturation had hence turned Indian Buddhism into a thoroughly “Chinese” phenomenon.<sup>16</sup>

Christianity was not a stranger to Chinese civilisation either: The first Christians - referred to as Nestorians<sup>17</sup> - had arrived in China as refugees, seeking shelter from tensions within the Christian churches and also from the incipient force of Islam. After the year 630, these immigrants established themselves as traders in the metropolises of the Tang, Song and Yuan. The Christian message, i.e. the tale of the sacrifice of the incarnate Son of God for the redemption of mankind from sinful existence and infernal punishment, was first introduced to a Chinese audience in the year 638. The “sutras” composed by Nestorian clerics reveal an understanding of the Chinese host culture which rivalled the inculturating effort of Buddhism. The main

---

*Religion - Dissenting Sects in Late Imperial China*, Cambridge / Massachusetts 1986 [first published in 1976].

<sup>15</sup> Often identified with the Amithabha Buddha (*Amitufo* 阿彌陀佛).

<sup>16</sup> Chinese Buddhism was supported by a plethora of institutions - from well-established monasteries to individual charitable foundations - though it lacked a hierarchical organisation which could have turned it into a “church”. See Erik Zürcher, *Bouddhisme, christianisme et société chinoise*, Paris: Julliard 1990, p. 27. Also, in the same context, Hubert Seiwert, “Hochkultur und fremde Religion: Buddhismus und Katholizismus in China”, in: M. Pye and Renate Stegerhoff (eds), *Religion in fremder Kultur: Religion als Minderheit in Europa und Asien*, Saarbrücken-Scheidt: Verlag Rita Dadder 1987, pp. 55-76. Seiwert defends Gernet’s view of ‘cultural conflict’, while focusing on the concept of “recoupment” - already defined in Michael Pye, “The Transplantation of Religions”, pp. 234-239 - as the main missionary technique of both (Mahayana) Buddhism and (Catholic) Christianity. See Hubert Seiwert, “Hochkultur und fremde Religion”, pp. 55 and 63-64.

<sup>17</sup> After the Syrian bishop Nestorius (380-451). Nestorius argued that Jesus had two separate natures, one divine and one human, thus contradicting the orthodox position of monophysitism. His teachings were condemned in three successive councils, and his disciples put under considerable pressure to conform. Eventually, only the Persian church retained the doctrines of Nestorius, known in Iran and Iraq as the Chaldean church. Nestorian Christianity was referred to in China as the “Luminous Religion” (*Jingjiao* 景教). Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, pp. 257-271 contains a summary of the expansion of the Nestorian church in the Middle East and Central Asia. For a history of Nestorianism in China, see Arthur Christopher Moule, *Christians in China before 1550*, London:

reason for the marginal status of the Christian church - and ultimately for its extinction after Nestorianism's twilight during the 13th and 14th centuries - was to be found in the reluctance of the leading clerics to elevate ethnically Chinese priests to the highest positions within the Nestorian hierarchy. Despite its early missionary success, the religion thus never overcame its quality as a "foreign" religion, always being highly dependent on the sympathy of the ruling dynasty.<sup>18</sup> Though our knowledge of the Nestorian communities is rather limited, we know that the Christian immigrants gradually adopted the cultural and civilisational patterns of their Chinese hosts. It is also known that the Nestorian missionaries adapted their parables to the agricultural reality of the rural Han, following a pattern also used by Buddhist monks: Morality plays enacted on market squares, performances of miracles and of supernatural apparitions were intended to create curiosity and to convince the astounded villagers of the protective qualities of the propagated religion.

The trade routes connecting China with the Middle East also enabled representatives of other beliefs to enter China: Merchants from the Arabian Peninsula brought the tidings of Islam, while Iranian and Central Asian itinerants introduced the customs of Manicheans, Jews and Christians of various denominations. This multi-

---

Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge 1930. Also Claude Philibert Dabry de Thiersant, *Le catholicisme en Chine au VIII<sup>e</sup> siècle de notre ère*, Paris: Ernest Leroux 1877.

<sup>18</sup> Nicolas Standaert - quoting Erik Zürcher, *Syllabus "Boedhisme in China: adaptatie en reactie"*, Leiden: Sinologisch Instituut 1978 - explained this missionary 'success' as proof for the hypothesis that "ideas are most easily absorbed when they are believed not to be foreign". Nicolas Standaert, "Chinese Christian Visits to the Underworld", in: Leonard Blussé and Harriet T. Zurndorfer (eds), *Conflict and Accommodation in Early Modern East Asia: Essays in Honour of Erik Zürcher*, Leiden, New York and Cologne: E. J. Brill 1993, p. 68 (also note 46). The discoveries made by Paul Pelliot in the caves of Dunhuang include the *Messiah Sutra* (*Mishihe jing* 彌時和經), compilations of Nestorian tracts (in Syriac and in Chinese), as well as the *Gloria in Excelsis* (*Sanwei zhongdu zang* 三聖中道藏, literally: "Hymn to the Three Majesties for obtaining salvation"). A copy, translation and interpretation of the latter can be found in A. C. Moule, *Christians in China before 1550*, pp. 59-63. For more information, see Jean-Paul Wiest, "Learning from the Missionary Past", in J.-P. Wiest and E. Tang (eds), *The Catholic Church in Modern China*, pp. 186-189. Current knowledge is anything but complete, and future research may well force us to reinterpret this religious tradition.

ethnic mosaic eventually became integrated into the socio-religious fabric of the Han majority, leaving behind traces of their original customs and beliefs.<sup>19</sup>

When in the late sixteenth century the Propaganda Fide eventually attempted to open up all of Asia to the Catholic world mission, Jesuits and Dominicans, Franciscans and Augustinians vied for the attention of the Chinese populace.<sup>20</sup> Using the Portuguese possessions of Goa and Macau as their entrepôts, the first Jesuits entered Japan in 1549 and China in the late 1590s. When the most prominent exponent of the new religion, Matteo Ricci (Li Madou 利瑪竇) arrived at the court of the Ming (in Beijing) in 1602, he set a trend for the remainder of the Jesuit mission in China. The Jesuit policy of accommodation had been influenced by the experiments of their confrères in India and in Japan, most of all by Roberto Nobili, and was now being adjusted to the world of Chinese elite culture and philosophy.<sup>21</sup> Though despised by the missionaries of the mendicant orders and conservative scholar-officials alike, Ricci and Jesuit successors survived the transition from the Chinese Ming dynasty to the Manchurian Qing during the 1640s. Owing to their position as court officials, usually employed as mathematicians and astronomers, the Jesuits concentrated on the conversion of leading scholar-officials and members of the imperial clan, as part of a grand plan which envisaged the conversion of the entire

---

<sup>19</sup> For more information on the missionary techniques of the Nestorian Christians, see Hou Jie and Fan Lizhu, *Zhongguo minzhong zongjiao yishi*, pp. 28-31. An interesting parallel can be found in the development of the Jewish community. Though never of any major significance, the history of China's Jews has been reconstructed with great interest, in particular since the arrival of the Jesuit missionaries in the sixteenth century. Representative publications include Michael Pollak, *Mandarins, Jews and Missionaries - The Jewish Experience in the Chinese Empire*, Philadelphia: Jewish Publishing Society of America 1980, Sidney Shapiro, *Jews in Old China - Studies by Chinese Scholars*, New York: Hippocrene Books 1984. Zhou Xun 周迅, *Chinese Perceptions of the 'Jews' and Judaism: A History of the Youtai*, Richmond: Curzon Press 2000 provides a convincingly argued challenge to the multitude of myths surrounding China's Jewish community and heritage.

<sup>20</sup> See C. Cary-Elwes, *China and the Cross*, pp. 81-86.

<sup>21</sup> Nicolas Standaert illustrated the inculturation of Christian theology by analysing the *Di-tian kao* 叩問天則 ("Inquiry into the Rule(r) of Heaven") by the seventeenth-century literatus Yan Mo 顏懋. See Nicolas Standaert, *The Fascinating God*, Rome: Pontifica Universitas Gregoriana 1995.

population once the ruling elite had been convinced.<sup>22</sup> No reign period seemed more receptive to this approach than the rule of the Kangxi 康熙 emperor (1662-1723). But at this crucial point, political factors emerged - both in Europe and in Qing China - which were to derail the Jesuit experiment for good.

The reaction of the Chinese elite - and to a certain extent also of the general population - to the introduction of Christianity can only be fathomed accurately if seen against the philosophical background of the late imperial period. Certain notions mooted by the elite eventually - albeit not in their entirety and in mutated form - also entered the minds of rural China. The following section will argue that the intellectual developments from the seventeenth to the early nineteenth century influenced the state's perception of popular religious movements in general and of popular Christianity in particular. The most crucial philosophical transformations occurred during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), the period witnessing the entry of modern Christianity into China.

### ***3. The philosophical landscape of late imperial China***

#### *a) Metaphysical speculation during the Ming*

In order to conceptualise the intellectual environment in which Christianity took root during the Ming and Qing, it is important to understand the vigour of religious syncretism in the late imperial era. Though syncretism can be traced to the

---

<sup>22</sup> The principle of subjecting the whole population to the religion of the ruler ("*cuius regio, huius religio*") had already been the practice since European antiquity and gained particular relevance in the aftermath of the Thirty Years War (1618-1648), when the Westphalian Peace divided Western and Central Europe into Protestant and Catholic hemispheres. The great European schism was clearly of paramount importance to the Jesuit missionaries of the seventeenth century. The personal and intellectual backgrounds of the early Christian missionaries has been covered in great detail. For a comprehensive bibliography see Erik Zürcher, Nicolas Standaert and Adrianus C. Dudink, *Bibliography of the Jesuit Mission in China (ca. 1580 - ca. 1680)*, Leiden: Centre of Non-Western Studies Leiden University 1991.

very beginnings of Chinese civilisation,<sup>23</sup> the tendency to amalgamate ostensibly similar concepts and phenomena from different traditions culminated during the Ming and early Qing.<sup>24</sup> These intellectual trends can be seen as a reaction against changes in the social order of the later Ming empire which threatened its social stability and external security. By the end of the sixteenth century, the lure of the ever-expanding commercial sector in the Lower Yangtse Delta made it highly attractive to engage in activities such as credit issuing through pawn shops, trading in silver and the manufacturing of fabrics and silk. The Confucian elite, who traditionally frowned upon commercial activity, used their official privileges (such as being exempt from tax and corvée) in order to maximise profits generated by the supervision of irrigation works, watermills, ferries and markets.<sup>25</sup> It was not unheard of that local officials and members of the literati elite even founded temples with the purpose of self-enrichment.<sup>26</sup> The authority of the state was in decline, unable to stem the loss of moral integrity among the literati and the alienation experienced by tillers and workhands. Consequently, commoners responded to official corruption by abandoning their agricultural duties in order to join self-defence militias, bandit gangs and

---

<sup>23</sup> The earliest recorded popular syncretic movement was the *Sanjiao dingzu* 三教訂祖 (“Tripod of the Three Teachings”). See Qin Baoqi 秦保奇, *Zhongguo dixia shehui* 中國地下社會 (“China’s Underground Societies”), Beijing: *Xueyuan chubanshe* 學苑出版社 1993, p. 148. More information on popular syncretism can be found in Ma Xisha 馬西沙 and Han Bingfang 韓炳芳, *Zhongguo minjian zongjiao shi* 中國民間宗教史 (“A History of Chinese Popular Religion”), Shanghai: *Shanghai renmin chubanshe* 上海人民出版社 1992, p. 764.

<sup>24</sup> Daoist tradition nevertheless retained an undeniable attraction to many religious people during the late imperial period. The services provided by the hermit Duan Yunyang on Wudang Mountain during the first half of the eighteenth century bear witness to this. See John Lagerwey, “The Pilgrimage to Wutang Shan”, in: Susan Naquin and Chü-fang Yü (eds), *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites*, p. 302.

<sup>25</sup> For failed candidates of the state examinations, a commercial career was often the only alternative to a life in permanent struggle. In the words of a fifteenth century *jinshi* from Huizhou: “It is not until a man has been repeatedly frustrated in his scholarly pursuit that he gives up his studies and takes up trade. After he has accumulated substantial savings he encourages his descendants, in planning for their future, to give up trade and take up studies. Trade and studies thus alternate with each other ... This can be likened to the revolution of a wheel, with its spokes touching the ground in turn. How can there be a preference for any one profession?” Cited in G. W. Skinner, “Mobility Strategies in Late Imperial China”, p. 357.



millenarian movements promising salvation from earthly misery. The increasingly unstable social situation thus directly favoured the spread of transcendentalism, offering succour to the suffering, and eternal justice to those who felt disadvantaged by a corrupt elite.<sup>27</sup>

To counterbalance the avarice of their peers - and to contain the proliferation of social discontent - concerned scholar-officials sought to regain some of the moral authority they had once been reputed for. For almost one millennium since its elevation to state doctrine during the Han dynasty, Confucianism had been confined to the highest strata of Chinese society. Concerned Confucians began to popularise their ideals, by borrowing concepts developed by Song and Ming intellectuals, in particular those of Wang Yangming 王陽明(1472-1529) and his disciples. Late Ming idealists took this syncretic Confucianism to the village squares, propelled by the vision of universal education. Apart from lecturing in public, the late Ming idealists encouraged voluntary associations, and in particular the village solidarity groups (*xiangyue* 鄉約) intended to relieve the state from policing the countryside, but also to scrutinise the families within a village structure for signs of seditious affiliations. While elite perceptions originated from earlier, purely academic traditions, similar ideas could frequently also be found in a more popular setting.<sup>28</sup> The Three-in-One philosophy formulated by Lin Zhaoen 林兆恩(1517-1598), for instance, drew on

---

<sup>26</sup> ... - a practice categorically prohibited by the imperial administration. See K. C. Hsiao, *Rural China*, p. 234.

<sup>27</sup> Daniel Bays has stressed the importance all religious movements - including popular Christianity - attached to egalitarianism, if not in this world then in afterlife. See Daniel H. Bays, "Christianity and the Chinese Sectarian Tradition", in: *Ch'ing-Shih Wen-T'i*, IV-7 (June 1982), p. 38 ff. His main arguments are reiterated in his chapter, "Christianity and Chinese Sects: Religious Tracts in the Late Nineteenth Century", in: Barnett and Fairbank, *Christianity in China*, pp. 121-134, in particular on pp. 122-129.

<sup>28</sup> This Quest for the Dao is illustrated in Ma Xisha and Han Bingfang, *Zhongguo minjian zongjiaoshi*, pp. 787-788. The authors argue that the elite tradition of searching for the "one unifying concept" behind all human philosophy (*Dao yi jiao san* 道一教三 "One Truth [in] Three Teachings") also existed within popular philosophy.

widely accepted notions within folk religion.<sup>29</sup> Whereas Lin approached the pursuit of the True Dao from an almost theological angle<sup>30</sup>, the intellectual elite had long since begun to create its own devices to accommodate spiritual needs with the quest for philosophical purity.<sup>31</sup> This holistic approach emphasised the main tenets of Buddhist *chan* 禪 thought, and was popularised by philosophers such as Wang Gen 王艮 (1483-1541).<sup>32</sup> Li Zhi 李贽 (alias Li Zhuowu 李卓吾, 1527-1602), Muslim by birth, had a least some degree of interest in the teachings of the Jesuit scholar-missionaries.<sup>33</sup> Despite such contacts, the missionaries active at the imperial court had been largely unaware of the syncretic developments within Confucianism.<sup>34</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> Lin combined the “Neo-Confucianism” propounded by Wang Yangming with Buddhist concepts spread by the lay *jushi* 居士 movement and late imperial interpretations of Daoism (*Quanzhendao* 全真道 “Path of Complete Truth”). Lin Zhaoen’s terminology - particularly when referring to concepts such as Benevolence *ren* 仁, Structure *li* 理, and Heart-and-Mind *xin* 心 - may seem akin to that of his Confucian contemporaries, but his syncretic teachings are endowed with an almost mystical quality. Though rejecting “irrational” aspects, such as levitation and corporeal immortality, ostentatious fasting, unreflected chanting of sutras and celibacy, his belief in the transcendental quality of the soul are reminiscent of religious traditions within Daoism and Buddhism. Two further elements of his philosophical work emphasise his role of the religious missionary: his quasi-messianic quest for a unifying “successor” to the Three Teachings, to complete and replace those of the past; and the mere fact that he managed to draw enthusiastic support from the peasantry. For further aspects of Lin Zhaoen’s philosophy and work, see Ma Xisha and Han Bingfang, *Zhongguo minjian zongjiaoshi*, pp. 769-788 and 846-849, as well as Richard Hon-Chun Shek, “Religion and Society in Late Ming: Sectarianism and Popular Thought in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century China”, PhD thesis: University of California 1980, pp. 67-71. Also Judith A. Berling, *The Syncretic Religion of Lin Zhaoen*, New York: Columbia University Press 1980. For a discussion on the continuation of Lin Zhaoen’s thought into the present era, see K. Dean, *Lord of the Three in One*, pp. 51-58 and 257-272.

<sup>30</sup> Lin identified himself with the (Maitreya) Buddha, composed Maitreyan literature and freely combined esoteric and ritual aspects of Chan and Daoist practice. See K. Dean, *Lord of the Three in One*, p. 8. References to the Maitreya Buddha are, however, less “millenarian” rather than “postapocalyptic”, since the Dao has already been revealed in Lin’s person and teaching. See *ibidem*, p. 23, footnote 25. For an introduction to Lin’s “Heart Method” (*genbei xinfu* 艮背心法), as well as other aspects of Three-in-One inner alchemy, see pp. 137-148.

<sup>31</sup> Popular wisdom had long since held that literati claimed to be disciples of Confucius but were even better disciples of Zhuangzi. See Tchang Fou-Jouei, *Initiation à la langue classique chinoise à partir d'extraits du Zhuangzi*, Paris: Librairie You-Feng 1989, p. 5.

<sup>32</sup> For more insight into the influence of Christianity on late Ming scholarship, see B. A. Elman, *Classicism, Politics, and Kinship*, pp. 89-91.

<sup>33</sup> His admiring appraisal of Matteo Ricci can be found in X. Wang, *Christianity and Imperial Culture*, p. 93.

<sup>34</sup> A letter by Joseph Milt (27-10-1806, from Fujian Province) illustrates - in a reported conversation between a literatus and a missionary on the subject of Chinese ‘superstitions’ and Western astrology - how the missionaries’ lack of insight into Chinese civilisation was taken up by members of the elite for the purpose of mockery even two hundred years later. The same source suggests that scholars sympathetic to the missionaries often criticised the Europeans for their simplistic view of Chinese

Their study of the ancient Confucian scriptures had led the court Jesuits to the assumption that Confucianism was mainly a set of philosophical maxims devoid of religious notions such as sin and redemption. Lack of a metaphysical dimension, the missionaries concluded, led to a spiritual vacuum in the human heart, for which several teachings of diabolical extraction competed.<sup>35</sup>

During the eighteenth century societies of popular religious thought proliferated, propagating the unity of the three philosophical traditions. Formations such as the Teaching of the Great Emptiness<sup>36</sup> often merged with sectarian groupings with outright political motivation.<sup>37</sup> A brief analysis of popular temples listed in local gazetteers during the mid-Qing reveals that Buddhist and Daoist temples were competing for public attention. Despite clearly expressed religious identities, the

---

philosophy. See *idem*, APF, SC, series III, *Cina et Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, folium 215. On the topic of marginality, relating to Jesuit and Buddhist priests, see also Lionel M. Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism: Chinese Traditions and Universal Civilization*, Durham / North Carolina and London: Duke 1997, p. 45.

<sup>35</sup> This refers chiefly to the perceived threat by Buddhism, ironically condemned by the missionaries as a non-“Chinese” (i.e. Confucian) import. Thus, we are tersely informed by D. F. Navarette that Buddhism, “the sect of the idols of *India*, ... was brought into China sixty years after the birth after our saviour. This curs’d sect has so spread, that it certainly far exceeds the Mahometans.” See his “Account of the Empire of China ...”, London: Churchill 1732, pp. 75-76 (the “learned Sect” of the Confucians is given ample space on pp. 165-220). For more general background concerning notions of sin and redemption, see Hans Küng and Julia Ching, *Christianity and Chinese Religions*, pp. 73 and 117. The controversy caused through a publication by the American-based dissident Zhang Hao, ascribing the lack of democracy in China to a perceived moralo-spiritual deficiency of Confucianism, shows that the views of seventeenth century Jesuits can still be made relevant today. See Zhang Hao 張 Hao, *Youan yishi yu minzhu chuantong* 元史意識與民主傳統 (“The awareness of darkness and democratic tradition”), Taipei: *Lianjing chubanshe* 聯經出版社 1989. The publication is critically analysed in Lo Ping-cheung, “Sin, Liberalism, and Confucian Political Thought - A Comment on Chang Hao’s Thesis”, in: Beatrice Leung and John D. Young, *Christianity in China: Foundations for Dialogue*, Hong Kong: Centre for Asian Studies / University of Hong Kong 1993, pp. 179-200.

<sup>36</sup> *Kongzijiao* 孔教 - note the homophony with the honorific title *Kong Zi* 孔子 for Confucius. For more details, see Qin Baoqi, *Zhongguo dixia shehui*, p. 124.

<sup>37</sup> Such politically oriented “secret societies” (*mimi jiaodang* 秘密教黨) were later instrumental in the overthrow of the Qing. For a concise overview of the secret societies active “against the Qing for the sake of restoring the Ming” (*fanqing fuming* 反清復明), see F. L. Davis, *Primitive Revolutionaries in China: A Study of Secret Societies in the Late Nineteenth Century*, Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press 1971. The origins of the nineteenth-century secret societies is the topic of the recent study by Barend J. ter Haar, *Ritual and Mythology of the Chinese Triads: Creating an Identity*, Leiden and Boston: E.J. Brill 1992. See *ibidem*, in particular pp. 25-59. See also Frederic Wakeman, *Strangers at the Gate: Social Disorder in South China, 1839-1892*, Berkeley: University of California Press 1966, pp. 117-125.

gazetteers place considerable emphasis on the common origins of the “three teachings”. Thus we find, in the introduction to the “Chapter of Daoist and Buddhist Saints” (“Xian-shi zhi” 仙史志) of the Ningbo gazetteer for 1725, the following explanation:

When the Confucian literati praise Buddhism, ... it is because Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism all share the same origin. Because of this reason, the disciples of the Buddha and Lao Zi use every opportunity to extol Confucianism, to explain and to propagate its teachings to the members of the lower classes. Without any distinction, all should be able to partake in the idea that the three teachings are originally one. For this purpose the chapter on Daoist and Buddhist saints has been compiled.<sup>38</sup>

A prime example of the merging of elite and popular traditions is the veneration of Confucius, whom popular lore had by then turned into a saint inhabiting Halls of Wisdom (*rutang* 儒堂), temples (*kongmiao* 孔廟) as well as the pantheon of saints and sages.<sup>39</sup> Though most commoners were unable to read, the body of Confucian writings, alongside the concept of the written word, enjoyed sacrosanct respect. This renders the notion of a sharp *qualitative* division between popular and elite attitudes questionable, at least for the later imperial period, implying that the socio-academic elite partook in the oral tradition of the uneducated population.<sup>40</sup> The

---

<sup>38</sup> 仙史志. *Zhongguo difangzhi jicheng* 中国地方志集成 “A compilation of Chinese local gazetteers”), vol. 30, *Zhejiang fuxianzhi ji* 浙江府县志集 (“Prefectural and district gazetteers for Zhejiang”), Shanghai: *Shanghai shuju* 上海书店 1993, “Yongzheng ningbofuzhi 雍正宁波府志” (“Ningbo *Fu* in the Yongzheng period”), Xian-shi 仙史 (‘Daoism and Buddhism’), p. 929.

<sup>39</sup> The entry “Confucianism” (*Rujiao* 儒教) in the widely-used *Zongjiao cidian* reflects this ambiguity. See Ren Xuyu 任叙宇 (ed.), *Zongjiao cidian* 宗教辞典 (“Dictionary of Religious Terms”), *Shanghai cishu chubanshe* 上海辞书出版社 1985, p. 1148.

<sup>40</sup> On Confucius worship in late imperial China, see Hou Jie and Fan Lizhu, *Zhongguo minzhong zongjiao yishi*, pp. 138 and 181-183. On the controversial topic of “little” and “great” forms of tradition, see David Johnson, *Ritual and Scripture in Chinese Popular Religion: Five Studies*, Berkeley: Chinese

issue is of great importance in the context of Christianity's inculturation into the intellectual and social traditions of late imperial China. During the Ming-Qing transition, eminent members of the Confucian intelligentsia, such as Xu Guangqi 徐光啟 (1562-1633), Li Zhizao 李之藻 (1565-1630) and Yang Tingyun 楊廷筠 (1562-1627), converted to the Jesuits' religion.<sup>41</sup> In an intellectual climate where differences between elite and popular perceptions became less pronounced, the ability to share traditions with the general population would remove the stigma of adhering to a popular "religious" movement. Simultaneously, the commoners had less to fear from the elite, in terms of anti-heterodox action.

---

Popular Culture Project 1995. In general, the interpretation suggested by Erik Zürcher (on various occasions; here a reference to the unpublished conference paper "Confucian and Christian Religiosity in Late Ming China", Hong Kong 1996 may suffice) appears convincing: from the most common environment to the exclusive heights of scholarly achievement, the belief in supernatural phenomena was generally accepted. This point was also emphatically stressed by Susan Naquin, at the ICAS colloquium in Noordwijkerhout, in July 1998. Timothy Barrett, in his review article of *The Flying Phoenix*, pointed out that the father of one of Yuan Mei's friends, Peng Dingqiu (1645-1719) - a celebrated Confucian scholar of the early Qing - also partook avidly in spiritualist seances. See T. Barrett, "History Writing and Spirit Writing", p. 604 on "Spirit Writing" - or the use of the planchette (*fúji* 扶乩) - which is also referred to in Susan Naquin, "Transmission of White Lotus Sectarianism in Late Imperial China", in: D. Johnson, A. Nathan and E. Rawski (eds), *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China*, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press 1985, p. 258. Angela Zito, *Of Body and Brush: Grand Sacrifice as Text / Performance in Eighteenth Century China*, Chicago: University of California Press 1997, p. 110 ff. offers further insight into the role of ritual in the world of the literati during the eighteenth century (with particular reference to Dai Zhen).

<sup>41</sup> See Nicolas Standaert, *Yang Tingyun*, in particular pp. 88-95. Summaries of all three lives can be seen in X. Wang, *Christianity and Imperial Culture*, pp. 98-106.

b) *Anti-religious tendencies during the eighteenth century*

*When I meet a monk, I never fail to greet him;  
When I see a Buddha, I never bow down.  
If one bows to a Buddha, the Buddha does not know;  
If one greets a monk, one is greeting what is actually there.<sup>42</sup>*

The link between the different levels of social culture was weakened in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when elite philosophy moved away from the metaphysical aspects of Song-Ming Confucianism. Instead of encouraging spiritual pursuits, early Qing philosophy emphasised practical action and devotion to the public good.<sup>43</sup> Due to the crucial importance of the Confucian classics for the civil service examinations, any reinterpretation of the Classics, known as the Four Books and Five Canonical Writings (*Sishu wujing* 四書五經), was bound to have political consequences. Hence it is not surprising that the first developments towards a revision of textual orthodoxy coincided with mounting political pressure on the private academies, in particular of the Lower Yangtse Valley (the *Jiangnan* 江南), during the latter half of the sixteenth century.<sup>44</sup> This period of Ming history was characterised by a weakening of dynastic leadership and the concomitant rise of eunuch factions, while the grip of the central administration over the regions loosened considerably. Political pressure climaxed between 1621 and 1624, when chief eunuch Wei Zhongxian launched a ferocious attack against the scholar officials of the Donglin

---

<sup>42</sup> The response of the literatus Yuan Mei 袁枚 (1716-1797), when once urged to bow to the statue of the Buddha. Cited in Arthur Waley, *Yuan Mei: Eighteenth Century Chinese Poet*, London: George Allen and Unwin 1956, p. 144.

<sup>43</sup> This process already began during the closing decades of the Ming dynasty and continued by developing into several philosophical schools. For an introductory discussion, see Liang Qichao, *Intellectual Trends in the Ch'ing Period*, Cambridge / Massachusetts: Harvard 1959, p. 5 (introductory remarks by the translator, Immanuel C.Y. Hsü) and pp. 21-23. The work was completed in 1920, intended to be the preface to a history of Chinese philosophy.

<sup>44</sup> Due to the immense importance of the literati clans of the Changzhou 常州 area, Qing New Text scholarship is also known as the “Changzhou School”. For a summary introduction see B. A. Elman, *Classicism, Politics, and Kinship*, pp. xxv - xxx and 1-7.

Academy. The persecutions convinced most intellectuals that the time for a more active role in the political life of the empire had come. Gradually the literati of the late Ming took recourse to the New Text (*jinwen* 經學) interpretation of Confucius as the unenthroned, enlightened ruler (*suwang* 素王), by re-evaluating the ethical implications of the Song tradition.<sup>45</sup> For the reformers of the nineteenth century, this would provide an ideological platform for actively pursuing institutional reform.<sup>46</sup> New Text criticism was also directed against the pervasive influence of Buddhism, ever since the Latter Han (25 - 220 AD), but in particular against the absorption of Buddhist mysticism by Tang and Song Confucianism and by the early Ming school of Wang Yangming. Already during the last few decades of the Ming period, Gu Xiancheng 顧憲成 (1550-1612) had criticised the metaphysical and populist components of Ming syncretism.<sup>47</sup> After the transition to Qing rule, dispelling mysticism became part of the general aim of “learning truth from facts” (*shishi qiushi* 實事求是). “Facts” were to be derived first and foremost through philological research based on authentic Confucian sources. The closely related School of Evidential Scholarship (*Kaozhengxue* 考證學), however, also encouraged the pursuit of other factual knowledge, such as the study of history and geography,

---

<sup>45</sup> The crucial tenet of the New Text school was that the Confucian tradition from the period of the Wang Mang 王莽 interregnum (9-25 AD) onwards had been based on corrupted sources. New Text scholars therefore embarked on a reconstruction of Former Han (207 BC - 9 AD) Confucianism based on the *Gongyang* commentaries (*Gongyang zhuan* 公羊傳) of the Spring and Autumn Annals (*Chunqiu* 春秋) as the sole intact source from the Former Han. For this reason, New Text scholarship was also referred to as [Former] “Han Learning” (*hanxue* 漢學). See Benjamin Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology - Intellectual and Social Aspects of Change in Late Imperial China*, Cambridge / Massachusetts and London: Council on East Asian Studies (Harvard University) and Harvard University Press 1984, pp. 22-26.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 23. Elman’s characterisation of *jinwen* as an “undercurrent” implies that the new movement remained relatively marginal during the eighteenth century.

<sup>47</sup> Liang Qichao, *Intellectual Trends*, pp. 33-34 and B. A. Elman, *Classicism, Politics, and Kinship*, p. 177.

astronomy and mathematics, music, archaeology (bronze inscriptions) and of the observation of nature.<sup>48</sup>

Some seventy years after Gu Xiancheng's death, Gu Yanwu 王夫之 (1613-1682) would reach the condemnatory verdict that Ming scholars "pack[ed] books away to avoid reading and drifted about conversing aimlessly."<sup>49</sup> Another great representative of late Ming Han Learning, Wang Fuzhi 王夫之 (1619-1692), also attempted to reinvigorate Confucianism by eradicating additions which had corrupted Song and early Ming scholarship.<sup>50</sup> Wang Fuzhi, formulated his ideas while in voluntary banishment, following the conquest of the Ming empire. Yan Ruojun 顏元 (1636-1704) examination of ancient forgeries propelled an interest in studying authentic classical texts, as passed on in the commentaries of the Han period, while the writings of Hu Wei 胡渭 (1633-1714) encouraged a more sceptical attitude towards mysticism.<sup>51</sup> Gu Yanwu, Yan Ruojun and Hu Wei broke the mould for a new type of orthodoxy, which soon developed into distinct philosophical schools.<sup>52</sup> In their zeal for textual authenticity, Qing scholars of the second generation, such as Hui Dong 惠棟 (1697-1758) and his junior Dai Zhen 戴震 (1724-1777), gave

---

<sup>48</sup> For a detailed discussion on the *Kaozheng* movement, see B. Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology*, pp. 39-85, and also Liang Qichao, *Intellectual Trends*, pp. 67-68. The literal translation as "School of Scrutinising and Proving" (for *Kaozhengxue* 考證學) follows a suggestion by Prof. T. Barrett.

<sup>49</sup> *ibidem*, p. 22 - quoting Quan Zuwang 全祖望, *Tinglin xiansheng shendaobiao yin* 亭林先生尚德堂印 ("Foreword in the epitaph on Gu Yanwu's Grave").

<sup>50</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 38-40.

<sup>51</sup> - though not towards unambiguous scepticism. As Richard Smith informs us, "Though often the butt of scholarly joke, fortune telling was ubiquitous". See Richard Joseph Smith, *Fortune Tellers and Philosophers: Divination in Traditional Chinese Society*, Boulder and London: Westview Press 1992, p. 43.

<sup>52</sup> Liang Qichao divided the philosophical landscape of the early Qing into three movements: the school of 'knowledge derived from daily practice', represented by Yan Yuan 顏元 (1635-1704), Li Gong 李公 (1659-1746) and Liu Xianting 劉向庭 (1648-1695); a second school dominated by Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲 (1610-1695) and Wan Sitong 萬世通 (1638-1702); finally a third school emphasising the importance of science (i.e. astronomy and mathematics), as propagated by Wang Xichan 王希憲 (1628-1682) and Mei Wendong 梅文鼎 (1633-1721). In particular the second of these schools continued to develop into traditions of own right, formulated by intellectuals such as Gu



priority to philological knowledge before all other rational pursuits.<sup>53</sup> The New Text movement continued to advocate imperial rulership based on justice and on the scholarly advice of the literati throughout the early period of the Qing. Whereas emperors from Shunzhi to Qianlong would usually respect the opinion of scholar-officialdom, they tended to rule in absolute style. This pattern was challenged for the first time at the close of the eighteenth century, in September 1799, when Han Learning literatus Hong Liangji 洪亮吉 remonstrated passionately against the influence at court of the Manchu aristocrat Heshen 和珅.<sup>54</sup> Heshen had enraged the scholar-officials of the Qianlong period, due to his steadily increasing influence over the emperor's decisions - a perceived parallel to the pernicious role of Wei Zhongxian almost two centuries earlier. The eventual Jiaqing emperor's public apology for exiling the remonstrating Hong Liangji marked the definitive end of Qing absolutism, the gradual waning of imperial might after the Qianlong period and the first shoots of the reform movement that would come to dominate the politico-philosophical scene during the late nineteenth century.<sup>55</sup>

Whereas the syncretic, populist scholar officials of the Ming had attempted to instil into the rural masses the basic tenets of Confucian morality through public lectures and the distribution of edifying literature (*shanshu* 善書), the Qing literati

---

Zuyu 朱彝尊 (1631-1692), Quan Zuwang 全祖望 (1705-1755) and Zhang Xuecheng 張學誠 (1738-1801). See Liang Qichao, *Intellectual Trends*, pp. 24-45.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 51-54 and 54-62, respectively. This fixation with philology eventually became Evidential Scholarship's own undoing. Utilising the very techniques postulated by the school, Liu Fenglu 劉鳳翥 (1776-1829) embarked on a frontal attack against perceived misinterpretations of the classics, epitomised by Liu's analysis of the *Gongyang* commentary - the symbol of resistance to early Qing orthodoxy. For more information on the New Text School during the late Qing see Liang Qichao, *Intellectual Trends*, pp. 88-91.

<sup>54</sup> The episode has been analysed in depth in David S. Nivison, "Ho-shen and his Accusers: Ideology and Political Behaviour in the Eighteenth Century", in: *idem* and Arthur F. Wright, *Confucianism in Action*, Stanford: Stanford University Press 1959, pp. 209-243.

<sup>55</sup> See B. A. Elman, *Classicism, Politics, and Kinship*, pp. 284-287, and David S. Nivison, "Ho-shen and his Accusers", pp. 232-243.

were convinced that the lectures had only rendered the peasantry more stubborn. The required panacea was not more words but rulership through good moral example and ritual practice.<sup>56</sup> Concomitant with the emphasis on practised ritual (*xili* 習禮), the intellectual elite justified its claim to superiority by constructing ancestral links between their clans and the rediscovered Han era, visualised through family shrines and lineage halls.<sup>57</sup> The claim to ancestral purity was in most cases an artificial construct, aimed at obscuring the loss of kinship cohesion, which the commercialisation of Ming society had wrought on the elite. In particular the practice of adopting commoners - *yinan* 養子, “Honorific Sons” - into gentry households weakened the cohesion of many rural clans. Commercialisation also made it more attractive to leave the ancestral homestead in order to be closer to their businesses in the city. The consequences for Christianity were grave: On an intellectual plane, the drive against heterodoxy drained support for religious beliefs among the elite, as being beneath the dignity of scholar-officials.<sup>58</sup> In their capacity as guardians of state and society, vigilance was therefore expected against popular movements with religious motivation. Gradually, even as philology questioned the basis of Confucian “orthodoxy”, a new intellectual setting was provided for the anti-heresy campaigns of

---

<sup>56</sup> The social isolation of the scholar officials and their postulated aim of encouraging society at large to benefit from their devotion to learning can be regarded as one of the inherent contradictions in Qing society - a situation which remained unchanged until the advent of the New Culture movement. For a vivid description of the life-style and outlook of Qing literati, based on the personal experience of the author, see Liang Qichao, *Intellectual Trends*, pp. 73-75.

<sup>57</sup> A very detailed account of the changing mentality among rural literati from the late Ming to the end of the eighteenth century can be found in Chow Kai-wing 周凱-wing in *The Rise of Confucian Ritualism in Late Imperial China: Ethics, Classics and Lineage Discourse*, Stanford: Stanford University Press 1994, pp. 15-21. See also Erik Zürcher, “A Complement to Confucianism: Christianity and Orthodoxy in Late Ming China”, in: Huang Chun-chieh and Erik Zürcher (eds), *Norms and the State in China*, Leiden: E. J. Brill 1993, p. 71 ff.

<sup>58</sup> The last will of Yuan Mei 袁枚 explicitly stated that no Buddhist funeral rites were to be performed on the occasion of his burial. See Waley, *Yuan Mei*, p. 202. Though Yuan was no stranger to the tenets of Buddhist thought, his correspondence with Buddhist friends reveal Yuan’s disinterest in Buddhist metaphysicism - and in all attempts to convert this Confucian hedonist. *Ibidem*, pp. 78-82 and 144, as well as Ya and Han, *Zhongguo wushenlun shi*, pp. 819-823.

the eighteenth century, which in due course would also affect the interaction between the state and popular Christianity.<sup>59</sup>

---

<sup>59</sup> In an attack against Buddhism during the Six Dynasties period, interestingly, the historian Zhao Yiqing (1710?-1764?) made a reference to Catholicism, as being the second worst religion, in terms of extravagance. See Timothy H. Barrett, "Ignorance and the Technology", p. 24.

#### **4. Christianity and the Manchurian elite**

Whereas scholar-officials vacillated between benign recognition and the refutation of Christianity as an assault on orthodoxy, their new Manchurian overlords saw themselves in a different situation. Having conquered the last vestiges of the Ming empire in the late 1640s, the Manchu rulers swiftly established a dual rulership model, which incorporated the elaborate bureaucratic traditions of the Ming, as well as preserving the tribal hierarchies that existed within the Manchurian aristocracy.<sup>60</sup> While the Qing state thus remained meritocratic in principle, the Manchurian elite was assigned to an institutional habitat which was intended to protect the numerically insignificant Manchurians from eventual assimilation. The Manchu emperors faced a tightrope course of trying to embrace the advantages of Han civilisation without abandoning the cultural (and even ethnic) integrity of the Manchurian people. This was to be achieved by the strict implementation of rules which made it difficult - theoretically impossible - for Manchurians to intermarry with the Han, to adopt Han codes of dress or hair style,<sup>61</sup> to bind the female foot, and to follow the “superstitious” traditions of the Han. Following an earlier perception of Christianity as a foreign (i.e. non-threatening) religious tradition, the attitudes among Manchurian noblemen towards the close of the seventeenth century began to change: Christianity had by now become a religion popular among the Han; adherence to the Christian cult was hence conducive to further assimilation into Han culture. Against this background, the

---

<sup>60</sup> Cf. S. L. Tikhvinski, *La domination mandchoue en Chine*, Moscow: Edition du Progrès 1982.

<sup>61</sup> The Manchus had imposed the shaving of the forehead and the wearing of the plait for all men of Han nationality following the conquest. This had been intended as a profound test of loyalty, since the cutting of one's bodily hair was included in the definition of “bodily mutilation”, prohibited to all sons who wanted to remain pious to their ancestors. Frederic Wakeman referred to this act of symbolical subjugation of male Han in his oeuvre *The Great Enterprise - The Manchu Reconstruction of Imperial Order in Seventeenth Century China*, Berkeley: University of California Press 1985, pp. 363 ff. and 759 ff.

prohibition of conversion among members of the Manchurian Banner elite was merely an extension of the original policy of ethnic preservation.<sup>62</sup>

The “point of no return” in the official stance towards Christianity was crossed during the late years of the Kangxi period, i.e. during the second decade of the eighteenth century. Whereas the Kangxi emperor had professed a genuine interest<sup>63</sup> in the teachings of the missionaries residing at his court for most of his long years in office, the increasingly negative attitude of the Papacy towards Jesuit accommodation gradually led to his personal disappointment and irritation. The visitation by the papal emissary Tournon<sup>64</sup> - sent to Beijing in order to inform the missionaries at the imperial court of the papal verdict against the toleration of ancestral worship in Christian communities - became the cause for an imperial edict, and thus for the first

---

<sup>62</sup> This is of course a rather simplistic account, which does not take into account that the Manchurians - just like the Mongols - had been very welcoming to Buddhism, in its Tibetan expression. Elsewhere in the empire, and with Shunzhi and Yongzheng as the main exceptions to the Manchurian preference of Lamaism, Buddhism had been generally regarded as a thoroughly “Chinese” religion. Nor does it pay justice to the efforts of the European missionaries to create translations into Manchurian and Mongolian. Examples thereof are listed in Adrianus Dudink, “The Zikawei (□□□□□) Collection in the Jesuit Theologate Library at Fugen □□□□ University (Taiwan): Background and Draft Catalogue”, in: *Sino-Western Cultural Relations Journal* XVIII (1996), pp. 36 and 37. For insight into the special position of Buddhism during the Yongzheng period, see Feng Erkang, *Yongzheng zhuan*, pp. 442-456.

<sup>63</sup> The term “interest” should be read in the meaning of “scientific curiosity”, a fact which was only recognised by the European missionaries after decades of misled hopes concerning a possible conversion of the emperor, and of the Manchurian aristocracy in general. An edict commenting on the trial of Yang Guangxian (KX 8/8, i.e. August/September 1669) provides interesting insight into the relationship between Christian missionaries and Qing China. See Wang Zhichun □□□□□□ (Zhao Chunchen □□□□□□, editor), *Qingchao rou yuan ji* □□□□□□□□□□ “Records of Hospitality towards Strangers in the Qing Dynasty”, Beijing: *Zhonghua shuju* □□□□□□□□ 1989, pp. 18-24, for a reprint of the anti-Christian refutation. An interesting parallel can be found in the reception of Jesuit missionaries by Akbar, paramount ruler of the (Muslim) Mogul dynasty in northern India. The Christians’ message ultimately served as a further ingredient in Akbar’s increasingly syncretic interpretation of Islam. To their disappointment, the missionaries thus found themselves in the role of “cultural envoys” - a role they shared with their confrères at the Kangxi court one hundred years later. For more information on the Indian mission, see John Correia-Afonso, *The Jesuits in India (1542-1773)*, Anand: Gujarat Shaitya Prakash 1997, pp. 93-95 and 119 ff.

<sup>64</sup> Charles Thomas Maillard de Tournon stayed as Apostolic Visitor to the East Indies in China between 1705 and 1710. See the - not unbiased - account by Francisco Gonzales de San Pedro, *Relation de la nouvelle persecution de la Chine jusqu'à la mort du Cardinal de Tournon*, Paris 1714, for Tournon's protests at the Kangxi court (pp. 43-45) and for the emperor's frosty response (pp. 96-102). For a biographical introduction, see Robert Charles Jenkins, *The Jesuits in China and the Legation of Cardinal de Tournon, etc*, London: D. Nutt 1894 and F. A. Rouleau, “Maillard de Tournon, Papal Legate at the Court of Peking - The First Imperial Audience (31 December 1705)”, in: *Archivum Historicum Societatis Jesu* XXXI (1962), pp. 264-323.

officially sanctioned persecution in many decades.<sup>65</sup> The Manchurian emperor, who took great delight in studying and promoting the depths of Han culture, chided the irreverent Tournon for deciding on matters which he, the European alien, could not comprehend in the least. The ensuing repercussions are more relevant because of their symbolic nature, rather than due to their severity: Individual reprisals were intended as a “warning shot” to missionary orders ready to comply with the Vatican’s new policy on the ancestor rites.<sup>66</sup> The new imperial policy, however symbolical, nevertheless led to a gradual deterioration between those members of the Manchurian elite who were intent on preserving their perceived cultural - and therefore also religious - heritage, and the Manchurian families who were loth to betray their European teachers. The latter included sections of the imperial family structure, in particular the influential Sunu clan, whose younger members were already participating in the violent contest for the succession of Kangxi. Following the enthronement of the Yongzheng emperor (1722), the vanquished Christian clan faced the wrath of the new ruler. Yinsi 胤禔 and Yintang 胤禕, two of the new emperor’s rivals in the race for succession, stood accused of “plotting” (*jiedang* 劫黨) against the empire’s leadership.<sup>67</sup> To follow the alien teachings, the Yongzheng leadership deduced, was

---

<sup>65</sup> The increasing sense of irritation is easily visible from the documents recording the conversation (i.e. confrontations) between Tournon, the Jesuits and the Kangxi emperor. See D. Sure and R. Noll, *100 Roman Documents concerning the Chinese Rites Controversy (1645-1941)*, San Francisco: Ricci Institute / University of San Francisco 1992. His laments are represented in his *Letter of the Cardinal of Tournon ... written ... to ... the Bishop of Conon, to Comfort him in the Prison in which he was confined ... at Peking under the custody of the Jesuits*, 1709 [copy held at the British Library].

<sup>66</sup> Evident from contemporary missionary correspondence, such as the diary preserved in the Vatican Library as Lat. Vat. 12849. The *Brevis narratio itineris ex Italia usque ad Chinam* was compiled by Carlo a Castorano and fellow Franciscan missionaries, and gives a detailed account of life in the early eighteenth century Shandong mission. Interestingly, all reported *persecutiones* seem, in fact, to have been isolated instances of reprisals against Christian individuals.

<sup>67</sup> See the document reprinted in *Wenxian congbian* 文獻叢編 (“Systematic compilation of documentary sources”), volume I, pp. 1-12: “Yinsi yintang an 胤禔胤禕案” (“The case against Yinsi and Yintang”), dated YZ 4/5/2, i.e. 1 June 1726. See also Josephus Suarez, S.J., “Nachrichten aus China - Leben und Sterben ... des zwölfften Sunischen Printzen Josephi”, 1728 [kept at the British Library].



developed sizeable Christian communities.<sup>70</sup> The fallout of the Adeodato affair of 1805, which caused entire networks of Han Chinese, Manchurian and European Christians to be uncovered, produced several high-ranking victims from among the Manchurian Banners. A public announcement by the Jiaqing emperor denounced Manchurian Christians as “unworthy to be regarded as men”, and ordered them to be enslaved, sent to Yili for hard labour and forever to be excised out of the name registers of the Manchurian aristocracy.<sup>71</sup> The imperial decree of the year 1811 reinforced the Yongzheng edict, threatening even stricter punishment for this unpardonable act, in addition to the immediate loss of their employment and government stipends. Militiamen from the Banners were furthermore entitled to enter the homes of the “traitors” in order to search for incriminating evidence.<sup>72</sup>

Throughout the mid-Qing period, contacts between Manchurian and Han Bannermen was frequently increased through common religious practice. “Venerable Associations” (*laohui* 老會) providing for the pilgrims and “Pilgrimage Associations” (*shenghui* 聖會) setting up stelae along pilgrimage routes bore witness to the extent of assimilation experienced by Manchurians in Qing society.<sup>73</sup>

---

<sup>70</sup> ... as well as Buddhist movements such as the One Incense-Stick and Sceptre (*Yizhuxiang ruyihui* 一柱香如意會) or the Original Condition of Chaos and Red Yang (*Hunyuan hongyanghui* 混元紅陽會). See de Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution*, pp. 307-308. Note that “Red” (紅 *hong*) Yang 陽 is homophonous with “Vast” (廣 *guang*) Yang 陽, and that the founder of the Vast Yang teaching Han Taihu 韓太極 had the honorific title “Patriarch of the Origin in Creative Chaos” (*Hunyuanzu* 混元祖). See Daniel Overmyer, *Precious Volumes: An Introduction to Chinese Sectarian Scriptures from the 16th and 17th centuries*, Cambridge / Massachusetts: Harvard University Press 1999, p. 321 (quoting R. H. C. Shek, “Religion and Society in Late Ming”, pp. 276-287). Similar observations are made in de Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution*, p. 478 on the early nineteenth century tendency among Mongolian bannermen to join religious groupings advocating vegetarianism (*zhaimen* 齋門).

<sup>71</sup> Many of the Manchurians involved were in fact women. Cf. the report by the Propaganda Fide, kept at their archives as SOCP, *Indie Orientali*, 1817, ff. 33-34. The document is a summary of the state of the mission, based on the missionary correspondence received from China during the first two decades of the nineteenth century.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibidem*, ff. 32-33, referring to the “Ten Articles” against Christianity in the imperial capital. The Adeodato affair is analysed in greater depth on folium 35.

<sup>73</sup> See Susan Naquin, “The Peking Pilgrimage to Miao-feng Shan: Religious Organizations and Sacred Site”, in: Susan Naquin and Chü-fang Yü (eds), *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites*, p. 342.



This general trend can also be observed with regard to Christianity, at least for the nineteenth century.<sup>74</sup> In a report on the state of the China mission in the wake of the Opium War, we are in fact informed that Christianity was *particularly* popular amongst the members of the non-Han minorities, including the “princes” of Manchurian origin.<sup>75</sup> By then, however, the aim of successfully resisting assimilation had already become elusive, and the macro-political situation had undergone an irreversible transformation.

---

<sup>74</sup> Evident as late as in 1838 from the legal proceedings against the Manchurian aristocrat Tusi 圖 圖 圖 圖 (alias Tusheng’a 圖 圖 圖 圖 圖 圖) and his son. See de Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution*, p. 525.

<sup>75</sup> See Richard Ball, *Christianity in China - State and Work of the Native Evangelists contained in a Series of Tracts*, London: Partridge and Oakey 1850, p. 13 ff. (Tract no. 3, first printed in Hong Kong, in March 1849), as well as E. Huc, *Souvenirs of a Journey*, vol. I, p. 147. We should keep in mind that such observations may very well have been aimed at the missionary home audiences, in order to elicit continuing support. The sources used for this thesis, however, seem to confirm that throughout the century of prohibition Manchurian bannermen were to be found among the ranks of China’s Christians.

## **Part II - Late imperial Christianity: Popular cult or alien creed?**

In the introductory first part we analysed the historical parameters for the inculturation of Christianity, from its Mediterranean roots to its entry into the Chinese sphere. The aim of the following part will be to analyse the reception of Christianity into the religious landscape of late imperial China, as well as to provide concrete examples of its inculturation. The most immediate difference between both parts is to be found in agency: Whereas during Part I the focus was on the role of the Jesuit missionaries and the reaction of the Chinese elite, the emphasis will now shift to the Christian commoner. This is partly due to the fact that during the eighteenth century, the influence of the Christian scholar-official elite weakened. More crucially, however, the change in focus is intended to determine the nature of inculturation after the Yongzheng edict: Who spearheaded the introduction of the new values into village society? How were the central tenets of Christian doctrine interpreted by the local congregations and which transformations did local traditions undergo after the conversion of families to Christianity? On the other hand, one vital role remains allocated to the literati elite, and to the European missionary orders, namely by giving a “voice” to villagers who, at best, were only partially literate.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Robert Chard has demonstrated the influence of elite literature on (printed expressions) of popular religious life. See his article “Rituals and Scriptures of the Stove Cult”, in: David Johnson (ed.), *Ritual and Scripture in Chinese Popular Religion, - Five Studies*, Berkeley: Chinese Popular Culture Project 1995, pp. 3-54, in particular p. 15 (on the use of paper scrolls).

## Chapter 4: Filial sons and a world of demons

### 1. *Controversial Rites: Ancestral tablets and auspicious inscriptions*

Despite its reputation as the Golden Century of the late imperial period,<sup>2</sup> the eighteenth century also harboured the seeds of the socio-political upheavals of the nineteenth century. Among other factors, bad weather conditions during the first half of the Qianlong period caused considerable hardship to the common people, and added directly to the appeal of secret societies among the peasantry. Farmers, boatpullers, and other sources of cheap labour who - for various reasons - found themselves without a reliable source of income, were forced to abandon their parental homes (and often the idea of setting up a home of their own) in order to become part of the migratory gravitation towards the economic abundance in the east of the empire. Confucian social morality put a strong emphasis on the relationship between Elder and Younger Brothers, and opposed the idea of separation from the family unit and also against a mendicant life style. In order to compensate for the loss of family connections, and also for the eventuality of having to die without offspring, many of the uprooted joined brotherhood associations as “artificial families” - of great importance both in spiritual terms (ancestral worship), as well as socially (old-age security).<sup>3</sup> The veneration of - surrogate - ancestral ties even provided a factor for cohesion with the educated elite, the very class most threatened by the popular

---

<sup>2</sup> The concept of the *Pax Manchurica* as a time of universal prosperity and peace within the empire was critically examined during the course of a conference outside Beijing in June 1995, organised by the *Research Centre on Qing History*, People's University 中国人民大学清史研究所. For a detailed account of the mid-Qing era see also Dai Yi 戴逸, *Qianlong ji qi shidai* 乾隆及其时代 (“Qianlong and his times”), Beijing: *Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe* 中国人民大学出版社 1992.

<sup>3</sup> See Patricia Ebrey, *Confucianism and Family Rituals in Imperial China*, Princeton: Princeton University Press 1991 on commonly accepted concepts of morality and ritual during the late imperial period. On the phenomenon of surrogate family units, see Qin Baoqi, *Zhongguo dixia shehui*, pp. 188-189 and 200.

movements.<sup>4</sup> During the eighteenth century, popular Buddhist movements imbued with Confucian patterns of social morality - such as the *Luojiao* 罗教<sup>5</sup> and the *Huangtiandao* 黄天大道<sup>6</sup> - provided solace and, literally, a mission in life for migrants separated from their village homes. Filial piety and respect for the hierarchies within the family were thus also core values of popular religious movements and were bound to influence the religious practice of China's Christian communities.<sup>7</sup>

One of the most common statements in memorials dealing with Christianity is that the members of the forbidden cult “chanted the sutras” (*songjing* 诵经), or

---

<sup>4</sup> See Myron L. Cohen, “Souls and Salvation: Conflicting Themes in Chinese Popular Religion”, in: James L. Watson and Evelyn S. Rawski, *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China*, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press 1988, p. 199, as well as Claudius Müller, *Wege der Götter und Menschen: Religionen im traditionellen China*, Berlin: Reimer 1989, p. 15. See also Stevan Harrell, “The Concept of Soul in Chinese Folk Religion”, in: *Journal of Asian Studies* XXXVIII-3 (May 1979), pp. 519-528. The appeal of heterodox movements for young, uprooted men working along the empire's waterways is dealt with in David E. Kelley, “Temples and Tribute Fleets: The Luo Sect and Boatmen's Associations in the Eighteenth Century”, in: *Modern China* VIII-3 (July 1982), pp. 361-391.

<sup>5</sup> Luo Qing 罗清 (1443-1527), founder of the Non-Activism cult (*Wuweijiao* 无为教), later known as the “Luo cult” (*Luojiao* 罗教). Like other cults too, *Luojiao* was known under a variety of names (such as *Laoguanzhai* 罗官宅, *Dashengjiao* 大成教, *Dachengjiao* 大成教, *Sanshengjiao* 三圣教, *Luojiang-longhuahui* 罗江龙会) in various parts of China's south-east during the eighteenth century. Luo Qing had left his parental home in Shandong at an early age, first to work as a soldier, then to enter monastic life. His *baojuan* writings, in particular *Tanshi wuwei juan* 谈诗无为卷 (“Book of non-activism in lamentation for the world”, published 1509) stressed the importance of Confucian family values. See D. Overmyer, *Precious Volumes*, pp. 106-112 and 303-304 (Appendix G, example 2), in particular the commentary concerning duties towards parents and state officials on p. 302. On the life and work of Luo Qing, see *idem*, “Boatmen and Buddhas: The Lo Chiao in Ming Dynasty China”, in: *History of Religions*, XVII/3-4 (February/March 1978), p. 292 and also his *Precious Volumes*, pp. 93-135. For a typology of *baojuan*, see R. H. C. Shek, “Religion and Society”, chapter VII, in particular pp. 155-157 and 213-218. Susan Naquin regards Luo Qing as the earliest ancestor of the White Lotus religion [after 1500]. See S. Naquin “Transmission of White Lotus Sectarianism”, p. 256, note 2.

<sup>6</sup> The Yellow Heaven sutras demanded that all cult members look after their own livelihood while also striving to respect their parents, families and neighbours. For more details see Hou Jie and Fan Lizhu, *Zhongguo minzhong zongjiao yishi* pp. 61-62, as well as Ma Xisha and Han Bingfang, *Zhongguo minjian zongjiaoshi*, p. 406, who suggest that the Way of Yellow Heaven (*Huangtiandao* 黄天大道) is an alternative denomination for the Great Way of Imperial Heaven (*Huangtian dadao* 黄天大道) - note the homophony of *huang*, in 黄 (“yellow”) and 皇 (“imperial”). Yellow is of course also the colour symbolising imperial authority. See D. Overmyer, *Precious Volumes*, pp. 343-351 for more examples of Yellow Heaven *baojuan*.

<sup>7</sup> Such expressions of common morality had long since become an all-pervasive element of religious life in China. See C. K. Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society*, pp. 29-43 and - on the role of “diffused religion” - pp. 296-300.

simply read “heretical scriptures” (*xieshu* 邪書), in similar fashion to Buddhist cults.<sup>8</sup> Were the eighteenth century Christians products of the same tendencies that engendered the above-mentioned fraternities? Christian communities often professed their faith by altering or dispensing with the traditional couplet-scrolls of auspicious characters on their doors (*menshen duilian* 門神對聯). This can be interpreted as a mild form of non-conformist behaviour, setting Christian households apart from their pagan neighbours without putting themselves into direct peril. Such instructions are documented in a letter sent by the Beijing-based missionary Pedrini to the *Propaganda Fide* in Rome. The letter, dated 2-11-1736, mentions a pamphlet (*libellum*) by Father Mailla which described exceptional ways of professing one’s faith during times of persecution. The faithful were supposed to repeat the following words (in Chinese): “I am a Christian ... In these troubled times I shall not enter a church. At home I shall not keep a Holy Image, I shall not preach in public and not affix door scrolls with the sacred names of Jesus and Mary. I, this insignificant servant, truly am a Christian.”<sup>9</sup>

Overt expressions of affiliation to Christian circles, such as signboards (*paiwei* 牌位) and scrolls bearing Christian texts are also documented.<sup>10</sup> Another distinctive

---

<sup>8</sup> Which means that the Christians’ chanting may have been accompanied by simple ritual music and offerings of tea and fruit. See Susan Naquin, “Transmission of White Lotus Sectarianism”, pp. 262-263. Chanting was also commonplace in Daoist rites. The Ba-xian archives in Sichuan contain a local court case against a certain Zhang Junde 張君德 chanting excerpts from the North Star Sutra (*Beidou jing* 北斗經) while performing a “spirit dance” (*tiao shen* 跳神). See the printed files compiled in *Ba-xian Archives* 巴縣檔案, Part V, Section 13 “Christianity and Heresy” (*yangjiao, xiejiao* 楊教, 邪教), p. 239: “Arrest of a shaman engaged in spirit dancing, QL 36/7 [Aug./Sept. 1771]” 楊教, 邪教, 跳神, 逮捕, 乾隆三十六年七月 [1771].

<sup>9</sup> *Ego sum Christianus.... In hoc temporis flera non ingredam ecclesiam. Domi non colam Sanctam Imaginem, non congregatio multitudinem ad recitandas precere, ad portam domus non affigam Sanctum Signum nomina Jesu et Mariae. Ego servulus vero sum Christianus ...* The original Chinese had been translated into Latin by the author Pedrini. APF, SC, “Cina”, 1737-1740, folium 20.

<sup>10</sup> See the memorial of 1813 by the official Qin Jie. Another memorial on a rural Christianity from 1806 (also FHA, original document 408, scroll 9258) confirms that Christians were able to display their faith more visibly in times of non-acute prohibition. Dehergne refers to Christian households at the beginning of the eighteenth century who decorated their doorposts with scrolls bearing the names of Mary and

feature was the practice of attaching symbols above the doors of Christian households.<sup>11</sup> In times of persecution, however, such expressions of communal affiliation were treated as sufficient evidence of “heresy”, exposing the Christians to the full severity of the potential consequences. Thus we learn, in the descriptions of Matteo Ripa, of the reprisals against local converts in the Shandong district of Feicheng *xian* 肥城縣 which occurred around the year 1714. The prefect of Jinan demanded that the local Christians remove all insignia of their heterodox affiliation from the door posts, replacing them with the conventional *menshen*. Those Christians who refused to apostatise and to remove the offensive character scrolls were given the usual thirty lashings with the bamboo cane, or forced into the cangue. Though not planned as annihilation campaigns, the punishment could be sufficiently harsh to inflict injuries leading to death.<sup>12</sup>

Emmanuele Conforti dedicated several longer passages towards the end of his report as Apostolic Visitor to the Chinese northwest to the problem of attaching *menshen*. He correctly identified the religious origin of the custom, i.e. as the symbolic representation of two warrior spirits from popular Buddhism, one depicted with a red, the other with a black face. And just as the Christians in European

---

Jesus; see Joseph Dehergne “La Mission de Pékin à la veille de la condamnation des rites”, in: *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft*, IX (1953), pp. 91-108, p. 317.

<sup>11</sup> Reported by contemporaries as having the shape of a “water turtle” (*bie* 龟). See Dudink, “The *Sheng-ch’ao tso-p’i*”, p. 125, note 89 on a passage in the *Zuopi*. Dudink “wonders” correctly whether the water creature may have symbolised the monogram for “□□□□□□□□” (“Jesus Christ, Son of God, Redeemer”), used by Christians throughout the pre-Christian Roman empire.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. the letter by Carlo da Castorano to Matteo Ripa in Michele Fatica (ed.), *Matteo Ripa, Giornale (1705-1724) - Testo critico, note e appendice documentaria di Michele Fatica, Vol. II (1711-1716)*, Napoli: IUO 1996, pp. 346. The passage in the original: ... *cominciò il mandarino a fare rinegare li christiani e che radessero li santi nomi dalle lor porte, ponendovi in lor luogo idoletti mon xin* [□□□□], *e che non voleva ciò fare, né rinegare la fede, li faceva bastonare sin a tanto che lo ubbidissero, e nel bastonarli diceva l’or: ‘Dove sta adesso il Fan ciao sue* [□□□□□□], i.e. the local head of the Christianity, here referring to the Jesuit Girolamo Franchi], *venga e vi liberi dalle mie mani*. The final remark, by the local official, may serve as a early example of competition for tangible political influence at the local level between foreign priests and Chinese officials. This rivalry returned

antiquity had classified the Janus cult as superstitious, the Visitor left no doubt of his own opinion.<sup>13</sup> But why was the use of this superstitious rudiment so widespread among Christians two to three generations following conversion? The question was taken one step further when Conforti observed that even outright pagan elements, such as auspicious characters and symbols (the *bagua* 八卦) painted on paper or fabric and attached to the door frame and roof beams, were commonly used in Christian families.<sup>14</sup> During the persecution following the discovery of “subversive materials” in the luggage of the missionary Adeodato in 1805, the imperial administration ordered the Christians in the imperial capital to erase all signs (*paitie* 牌位) attached to homes and also to their churches. The move was intended to eradicate any sense of legitimacy for places of Christian worship. Of the four churches in Beijing, the inscriptions of the Southern Cathedral (*Nantang* 南堂) and of its northern equivalent *Beitang* 北堂 were most “dangerous” in this regard, since the portals of both churches bore imperial approvals from the Kangxi period.<sup>15</sup> Seen from a popular angle, the same inscriptions may have been regarded as possessing the same protective powers as domestic *menshen*. Against this background, both the Chinese state as well

---

to prominence in the nineteenth century, with the introduction of extraterritoriality in the wake of the Opium Wars and the subsequent extension of missionary rights.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Bernward Willeke, “The Report of the Apostolic Visitation of D. Emmanuele Conforti on the Franciscan Missions in Shansi, Shensi and Kansu (1798)”, in: *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* LXXXIV-1/2 (1991), pp. 260-261.

<sup>14</sup> See *ibidem*, p. 261. Here a look at similar customs in “Christian Europe” is helpful, where inscriptions bearing Christian symbols and messages replaced much older pagan ones. The Florianus cult of the late mediaevum (“Saint Florian, protect our home, burn down the one of someone else”) is an apt example of how anti-Christian thinking could become translated into vocabulary of popular Christianity. The superstitious essence of this *menshen* is preserved even in its Christian clothing.

<sup>15</sup> The paean to Christianity by the Kangxi emperor can still be read today. The Beitang bore the simpler inscription “Approved by imperial edict as a church of the Lord of Heaven” ([*zhi-jian*] *tianzhutang* 天主堂). The characters engraved into the portal of the Eastern Cathedral (*Dongtang* 東堂) read “True Origin of all Creation” (*wanwu zhenyuan* 萬物真源), which created an impression of both Christian and Confucian orthodoxy. More examples of Jesuit-Ruist hybridity, can be found in the first chapter of Lionel M. Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism*. More general insight into the persecution following the Adeodato affair can be found in a missionary report kept at the APF as document SC, series III, *Cina and Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, folium 400 V / R.

as the Papacy should have been opposed to their display from the beginning - although this would have caused the ire of the Jesuit court missionaries.

The problem of displaying symbols of spiritual significance became the central issue of the so-called Rites Controversy, which vexed the China mission of the early eighteenth century. Local Christians often obeyed the papal injunctions against such “illicit rites” by eradicating the physical evidence of traditional Chinese rituals altogether. The Vatican had ruled against the argument that the rites were a mere extension of filial piety beyond the threshold of death, the original Confucian stance.<sup>16</sup> In the interpretation of the greater populace, much deplored by the Confucian state officials, the rites had taken on a spiritual dimension, adding ancestral souls to the pantheon of worshipped deities. This interpretative dichotomy provided the background for the papal bull ordering Chinese Christians to remove the ancestral worship tablets, or to continue with the rite on the sole basis of filial respect.<sup>17</sup> The missionaries’ quest to differentiate between varying degrees of “superstition” inherent in ancestral worship led to strained definitions as to which cults really deserved to be regarded as mere expressions of “filial piety”, devoid of religious connotations.<sup>18</sup> Missionary correspondence from the first decade of the nineteenth century reveals that the literati of a city in Sichuan had received orders from their magistrate to erect tablets in traditional fashion. In the view of the reporting missionary, it was not the

---

<sup>16</sup> The main arguments of the “Rites Controversy” are summarised in an early eighteenth century publication entitled *Congregatio Sancti Officii Acta causae rituum seu ceremoniarum sinensium*, published in Venice by Antonio Bortoli in 1709. The documents are divided into four groups, airing the arguments of both sides.

<sup>17</sup> Missionary correspondence is full of arguments for or against attributing *religious* significance to the rites. See for instance, the letter by the Franciscan Delgado (APF, SC, series III, 1806-1811, *Cina e Regni Adiacenti*, ff. 145-148) commenting on the pressure to conform to Confucian tradition, experienced by Christians wanting to participate in official examinations.

<sup>18</sup> In the general imagination, the ancestors only survived as benevolent spirits in the underworld precisely because their tablets were worshipped. Changing to a new belief that radically altered this



inscription which was to be regarded as “superstitious”, but the colour of the tablet (“*tabella papyri flori coloris*”). Whether the papyrus colour was seen as indicative of the shades of sunlight used by Buddhist believers, or whether the yellowish hue created a link with the Yellow Emperor or was simply meant to symbolise loyalty to the imperial throne remains unstated.<sup>19</sup> For the Christians who had heeded the admonitions of the papacy to eradicate “superstitious” tablets, the magistrate’s decree entailed the choice of peacefully continuing with their official careers or of a painful inquisition at the hands of the yamen torturer.<sup>20</sup>

In vain defenders of the Jesuit approach to ancestral worship attempted to demonstrate that the “Confucian” rites were devoid of any religious quality. Even three generations following the papal verdict on the ancestor rites, the discrepancies in interpretation remained. Conforti’s report on the state of the mission in Shanxi and Shaanxi reveals that ancestral worship, i.e. the burning of incense and kow-towing in front of the images of the defunct ancestors, was still wide-spread among the Christians of late eighteenth century China.<sup>21</sup> The problem, according to Conforti’s report, was that in families which retained a considerable proportion of non-converts, the practice was almost unavoidable. We also hear of Christians who had been forced by the local magistrates to reintroduce the ancestral cult, by pain of torture or death. In the case of a Christian family with the surname *Fan*, the pagan neighbours played

---

practice thus not only endangered the wellbeing of the ancestors but also had pernicious consequences for the world of the living. See M. L. Cohen, “Souls and Salvation”, p. 201.

<sup>19</sup> The case is cited as the second of a series of “doubts” (*dubia*) questioning the wisdom of the papal decree against the continuation of ancestral worship in Christian households. The relevant passage reads as follows: *Est unus Mandarinus e civitate Kioung tehoon, qui iussit omnibus christianis sui districtis erigerent tabellam papyri flori coloris, in qua est una inscriptio adjuncta, qua non est superstitiosa, sed color papyri est...* (“An official in the municipality of *Kioung tehoon* [Sichuan, yet to be identified] ordered all Christians of his district to erect tablets in the colour of the papyrus flower, together with an inscription which in itself is not superstitious, although the papyrus colour is”). See APF document SOCP, *Indie Orientali*, 1806-1811, folium 22.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, ff. 22-23

their part, by taking advantage of the absence of the family head in order to reinstate the customary tablets on the first day of the Lunar new year. But at times, even in clans with a relatively homogenous Christian composition, the clan elder (“*caputfamilias*”) would hold a watchful eye over the observation of the rite - whether he happened to be a Christian or not. Any intervention by the European or Chinese outsider, i.e. a visiting missionary, only served to further discord within the family unit, in particular in the families of the literati where Confucian traditions prevailed almost unchallenged.<sup>22</sup> A letter sent around the year 1805 by Father Delgado (OP), Vicar Apostolic of Tunking, bears witness to the difficulties remaining Christians within the scholar-official elite experienced - in particular when faced with accomplishing the civil service examinations.<sup>23</sup> The core of the problem was (still) the quality of the honorific term *sheng* 聖, used in conjunction with the person of Confucius. Christian purists would recoil from using the term in its spiritual meaning of “holy” or “sacred”,<sup>24</sup> while the rendering preferred by the accommodationists, “sage” or “wise”, was too neutral for most. Delgado’s laconic reasoning in pleading for tolerance was simple: “In confirmation of the great mind Navarette, quoting two Christian literati in conversation: ‘There are many in the empire who can be referred to as *sheng*, but really nobody who can be called a saint.’”<sup>25</sup> In a final bid to prevent a

---

<sup>21</sup> See B. Willeke, “The Report of the Apostolic Visitation”, p. 258 ff.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 254-257.

<sup>23</sup> This was a problem which had already become apparent during the early stages of the Rites Controversy. Maillard de Tournon’s position was to exclude all Christian candidates from the sacraments who refused to abandon their traditional rituals honouring Confucius and the ancestors. See F. Margiotti, *Il cattolicesimo nello Shansi*, p. 448.

<sup>24</sup> The final verdict reasoned that any statement indicating that the historical Confucius was a man of unlimited virtue could be interpreted as implying that he was perfect, without fault (*absque ulla erroris*). See the explanations from the year 1806 by the Vicar Apostolic of Sichuan, Cardinal Dufresse, preserved as APF file SC, series III, *Cina e Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, ff. 202-206.

<sup>25</sup> *In confirmationem laudatus Ill.mus Navarette refert verba duorum Litteratorum christianorum, quorum unus affirmabat: Homines xing imperium sinicum multo habuisse; sanctos vere nullos.* Quoted from the letter by F. Delgado, APF, SC, series III, *Cina and Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, ff. 145-148 (in particular folium 145 R and V). See also the Englished version of Navarette’s report, filed at the

True ruler over all creation, Heaven and Earth; who made Heaven to give us cover, and the earth in order to sustain us, and everything pertaining to these, given to mankind to our benefit. God intended that all those who are in this world respect him with all their heart, that they lead a meritorious life and shun evil in order to attain an eternally joyful life. Of all the mercy bestowed by the true ruler on all human beings nothing surpasses one's parents; when they leave this world, their merits and transgressions follow suit, and regardless of whether they rise [to Heaven] or descend [into Hell], they will never come back home. Pious sons and compassionate grandsons erect tablets or statues not because the [parental] spirit rest in them, but in order to cultivate their memory. Let us revere the true ruler of all that is twixt Heaven and Earth, and let us piously respect ancestors and parents.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> This example of “cultural hybridity” corresponds with the designation Lionel Jensen assigned to the Jesuits resident at the imperial court. Whether the missionaries’ *accommodation* was genuine to the marrow or contained elements of wanting to impress the scholar-official elite is a different matter. Cf. Lionel M. Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism*, p. 80 ff.

99

The outcome of the Rites Controversy is well documented: The binding ruling by Pope Benedict XIV had to be accepted by all Catholic priests in China, both Propaganda and padroado missionaries, who were obliged to swear solemnly not to tolerate “pagan rites” in their congregations.<sup>28</sup> China’s Christians, however, reacted to the bull in different ways. Many congregations retained the cult, in varying degrees of compliance. Most frequently, however, Christians followed the papal decree of 1714 by removing the tablets altogether. One such example is documented in the confessions of officers belonging to the Han-Chinese Blue Banner. The memorial, recording their plea for mercy on grounds of rueful apostasy, states in unambiguous terms that Christians were “not allowed to attach paper scrolls for the Hearth God (*Zaowang* 灶神), neither to sacrifice to our ancestors on the grave mound. This is an indisputable rule of our religion”.<sup>29</sup> The fact that officials arrested Christians for possessing Christian objects and character scrolls within the privacy of their homes should be seen as an indicator that such displays were in more normal times tolerated by the local authorities, thus conceding that Christianity had become a common expression of popular religious life. It should finally be remembered that the precise nature of ancestral worship varied considerably throughout China. In particular in the northern provinces, a great number of literati had dispensed with the tablets altogether. Under such circumstances, the Roman missionaries needed little effort in order to

<sup>28</sup> The *Formula Juramenti* which had to be sworn and signed individually by all missionaries in China's bishoprics and vicariates apostolic, contained the uncompromising statement "never to tolerate that the Chinese Rites and Ceremonies be practised by the Christians" (*numquam patiar, ut Ritus ac Ceremoniae Sinenses ... ab eisdem christianis ad praxim deduantur*). Cf. APF, SC, series III, *Cina e Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, ff. 114 and 141.

[illegible]

explain the new policy of the Vatican concerning the ancestral rites. Missionaries intent on preserving the custom may even have contributed by sowing confusion.<sup>30</sup>

## 2. *Interaction with other religious movements*

The use of ancestral tablets may be seen as one indicator of the extent to which China's Christians followed the patterns of local religious life. But elements of popular religious life also entered Christianity through direct personal links with other movements. This may have been particularly true of the "Dragon Flower Society" (*Longhuahui* 龍花會), a development of the Pure Land tradition,<sup>31</sup> which captured the imagination of the peasantry mainly in the Lower Yangtse Delta.<sup>32</sup> Its audience comprised mainly members of the lower and middle peasantry, featuring a comparatively high proportion of women, who attended religious gatherings which were not segregated according to gender.<sup>33</sup> The liturgical traditions of the *Longhua* followers were colourful: Music and chanting accompanied rituals devoted to statues with anthropomorphic features. To the religious villagefolk these statues were tangible

---

<sup>30</sup> *Dans les provinces du Nord, il y'a un très-grand nombre de gentils qui ne gardent point les tablettes de leurs parents défunts.* Quoted from Francisco Gonzales de San Pedro, *Relation de la nouvelle persecution de la Chine jusqu'à la mort du Cardinal de Tournon ...*, p. 68.

<sup>31</sup> The *baojuan* which lies at the heart of the *Longhua* tradition - the *Gu-fo tianzhen kaozheng longhua baojing* 古佛天珍考證龍花寶經 ("Dragon-flower precious scripture verified by the ancient Buddha Tianzhen"), also simply known as the *Longhua jing* 龍花經 ("Dragonflower Classic") - refers to *Longhua* followers as adherents of the "Lotus school" (*Lianzong* 蓮宗), without the use of the adjective "White". The author of the precious scroll, known as "Gong Chang" (公昌, the two radicals forming the common surname Zhang 張), was revered as the incarnation of the Tianzhen Buddha, who returned to the mortal world in order to gather and save all (Buddhist) sects in the third Dragon Flower Assembly. See D. Overmyer, *Precious Volumes*, pp. 248-267; also R. H. C. Shek, "Religion and Society", pp. 176-189, for an analytical synopsis.

<sup>32</sup> This is in any case the interpretation of J. J. M. de Groot, who refers to the movement as the *Lung-Hwa Sect*. The term may be a translation from the Sanskrit *nagapushpa*, representing the holy tree under which the Buddha of the Future is awaiting his time to descend to earth. The *Longhua* cult would thus be a derivative of Maitreyanism.

<sup>33</sup> Women played an important role in the preservation of religious traditions, not least because Qing law treated female "heretics" more leniently than men: Whereas their menfolk were routinely arrested, exiled or executed, women were often allowed to stay at home with their children. See Susan Naquin, "Connections between Rebellions: Sect Family Networks in Qing China", in: *Modern China* VIII-3 (July 1982), p. 354.

representations of a hierarchy of superhuman beings which shadowed that of another Maitrayan movement, the *Xiantianjiao* 先天教 (“Pre-Celestial Teaching”).<sup>34</sup> While their theological core was almost identical, the two could not have been more dissimilar in ritual terms. The *Longhua* cult appealed to a popular audience accustomed to elaborate and joyous celebrations, whereas the followers of the *Xiantian* cult tended to practise in puritanical simplicity. The *Xiantian* flock congregated in the homes of co-religionists, without any segregation of the sexes. To escape from the Confucian guardians of orthodoxy, meetings took place secretly, while a close teacher-disciple bond provided additional security. There were near to no overt manifestations of this faith, which existed without shrines or temples or statues. Instead of ritual music, the faithful would partake in a simple vegetarian meal and in pious conversations. Recitals and the profession of the five fundamental principles would usually complete a religious gathering. As an additional sign of their Buddhist pledge to forsake the killing of animated beings, *Xiantian* followers would release animals purchased from meat markets.<sup>35</sup> Full of respect for the written word, many believers also familiarised themselves with the pamphlets distributed by Christian missionaries.<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> Both movements were allegedly founded by Luo Huai 羅懷 (i.e. Luo Qing 羅清), as expressions of the principle of Non-Action (*wuwei* 無為). Their hierarchy was crowned by the “Three Ultimates” (*san ji* 三極, translated by de Groot as “Apexes”) of the Void, Supreme and August Ultimates (*wuji* 無極, *taiji* 太極, *huangji* 皇極) and followed by the Three Jewels (*Triratna*, or *san bao* 三寶), representing the Buddhas (*fo* 佛), the Dharma (*fa* 法) and the Sangha (*seng* 僧). Buddhas, bodhisattvas and Daoist saints would complete the spiritual hierarchy in order of personal choice. While many households added their own ancestors to this celestial order, the religious veneration of ancestors was by no means universal. See de Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution*, p. 180 ff.

<sup>35</sup> A practice known as Releasing Life (*fangsheng* 放生). Kindness towards all animated nature was regarded as a highly meritorious moral quality, and consequently advocated in the morality books (*shanshu* 善書) and ledgers of merit and demerit (*gong-guo ge* 功過格) of the period. See R. H. C. Shek, “Religion and Society”, pp. 129 ff. and 145.

<sup>36</sup> At least by the end of the nineteenth century, and to the obvious joy of de Groot. See his *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution*, p. 192.

Christian communities shared some of the features of *Longhua* iconophilia and the preoccupation with the pure word of the *Xiantian* movement. In fact, to the uninitiated official, these parallels could appear as proof that all three were part of the same “heretical” substratum of popular religiosity. Perceived similarities in the religious concepts of *Xiantianjiao* and Christianity exacerbated the confusion. Was, after all, the Pre-Celestials’ belief in the creation of life out of the Apex of Nothingness (*wuji* 無極) not reminiscent of that of the Christians in the Genesis? Furthermore, some members of the *Xiantian* cult had come to the conclusion that Jesus the Saviour was one of the *dipankaras* (or *randengfo* 燃燈佛, i.e. Light-Making Buddhas), and hence a predecessor of Shakyamuni.<sup>37</sup> Pious simplicity and private observance were of course preferable to the unchecked propagation of popular beliefs. But even private heresy, the state feared, could eventually lead to the subversion of public order. The “subversive” character of religious popular movements lay in the “practising and spreading of heretical teachings” (*xi-chuan xiejiao* 習傳邪教) in full view of the greater community. Such “treacherous and criminal” (*jian-fei* 奸匪) conduct is presented in a memorial of 23 May 1812 by Yan Jian 顏建, governor general for Zhili. Yan Jian, referring to the proliferation of Christian missionary activity in the “Miao areas” (*miaojiang* 苗疆)<sup>38</sup>, pointed out signboards with Christian mottoes and symbols (*huaxie tianzhu paiwei* 華協天主排衛), which formed the rallying point for preachers intending to

---

<sup>37</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 179 and 192.

<sup>38</sup> Increasing pressure through Han settlements as well as overt discrimination and persecution by officials forced Miao villagers and other minorities (e.g. Lisu, Lahu) in Yunnan and Guizhou to flee into inaccessible mountain terrain. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, ethnic minorities converted to Christianity *en masse*, encouraged by the presence of foreign missionaries. See T’ien Ju-k’ang, *Peaks of Faith*, pp. 6-11. An account of the nineteenth century Lolo mission by Jean Baptiste Bodes de Guébriant can be found in A. Flachère, *Monsieur de Guébriant - Le missionnaire*, Paris: Plon 1946, pp. 524-553 and 576-583. The biography also contains occasional references (*passim*) to “superstitious practices” among the converted population.





Heterodox religious thought in the late imperial period was characterised by the interaction between elements of (Confucian) orthodoxy, tolerated deviations from the religious (Buddhist or Daoist) establishment, localised (shamanic, polytheistic) customs as well as genuinely new ideas. Lacking detailed information concerning orthodoxy and a confident grasp of the theological framework of the religious systems functioning in China, the rural public embraced such “heterodox” phenomena with few doubts. What mattered far more within the microcosm of village society was the charisma of a movement's leader, as well as the practical benefits a village audience could expect.<sup>43</sup> Early nineteenth century sources clearly indicate the popularity of pilgrimages perceived as “problematic” by the imperial government. Ever-vigilant against potential sectarian unrest, the state monitored processions (known as “Processions for welcoming the spirits”, *ying-shen saihui* 迎神賽會) and attempted to limit the flow of religious pilgrims, in particular from other provinces.<sup>44</sup> Such pilgrimages attracted a significant proportion of the farming population and were therefore interpreted as economically “detrimental” - also because they “promote[d] dissipation, and tend[ed] to corrupt the hearts and customs”.<sup>45</sup> One example shedding

---

<sup>43</sup> Commenting on syncretic religious movements in China, V. V. Malyavin distinguishes between “popular religions” (*minjian zongjiao* 民間宗教) and “popular beliefs” (*minjian xinyang* 民間信仰). As opposed to the latter, “popular religions” are defined as being ultimately dependent on the traditions established by the religious systems of Buddhism and Daoism. State and ruling elite were usually more tolerant towards expressions of heterodox dissent if these did not renounce all affiliations with previous systems. Movements which intended to form a qualitatively new system - millenarian movements, as the prime example - are thus to be seen as expressions of “popular beliefs”, which were condemned by the established religions and by the authorities as “heretical” (*xie* 邪) and politically dangerous. See Vladimir Vyacheslavovich Malyavin, “Zhongguo minjian zongjiao qushi” 中國民間宗教趨勢 (“Tendencies in Chinese Popular Religion”), in: *Shijie zongjiao yanjiu* 世界宗教研究 (“Research into World Religions”) January 1994, pp. 122-124.

<sup>44</sup> The first decree prohibiting interprovincial pilgrimages dates from 1739, in the early Qianlong period - a period of calm for the Christian communities. See K. C. Hsiao, *Rural China*, pp. 229-230. For a general introduction to the topic see Susan Naquin and Chün-fang Yü, “Pilgrimages in China”, in Susan Naquin and Chün-fang Yü (eds), *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites in China*, pp. 1-26, in particular pp. 9-21.

<sup>45</sup> Cited from the Jiaqing emperor's edict of 14 June 1800 (as translated by de Groot). See J. J. M. de Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution*, p. 383.

light on the world of heterodox sects towards the beginning of the eighteenth century can be found in a description dating from the year 1714, contained in the travelogue of Matteo Ripa. Ripa begins, following contemporary convention, by segregating the “orthodox sects” of Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism from the panoply of popular religious movements. The latter encompassed “thirty-six minor sects and seventy-two large ones” (*sanshiliu xiaojiao, qishier longmen* 三十三小教, 七十二大教). Officials, however, only recognised the three grand traditions as legitimate, rejecting all others as unorthodox.<sup>46</sup> Ripa concluded that since the majority of Chinese commoners belonged to one of the legion of outlawed sectarian movements, the case against Christian “heretics” could certainly not be severe.<sup>47</sup> Providing more detailed information on the situation concerning popular religious movements in Shandong, Ripa cited the three biggest contemporary movements: *Ru-li-jiao* 儒里教,<sup>48</sup> *Kong-zi-jiao* 孔子教,<sup>49</sup> and the aforementioned *Xing-li-jiao* 邢里教, stressing the extortionate methods of its founder Liu Mingde, and the fascination which emanated from his construct of being the reincarnation of the legendary Confucius. With reference to Liu Mingde’s movement, Ripa warns his missionary audience against admitting converts of dubious quality (*con cuor non sincero*), who entered the community of the Christian faithful in order to escape the watchful eye of the district magistrate, eager to root out any remnants of the Xing-li movement. Ripa’s concern then drifts to those converts who

---

<sup>46</sup> ... solamente tre sette si danno per vere e s’approvano, cioè: *Giu kiao* [□□□□], *Fo kiao* [□□□□], *Tao kiao* [□□□□], setta de letterati, de bonzi e de *tauzi* [□□□□], e tutte l’altre sette si danno per false e si riprovano.” See Michele Fatica (ed.), *Matteo Ripa, Giornale (1705-1724), Vol. II (1711-1716)*, p. 353.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibidem*. Ripa, in fact, quoted the number of one hundred and eight illegal sectarian movements.

<sup>48</sup> “Servants of Confucianism” - the name may be a protective veneer, in order to confuse the state officials.

<sup>49</sup> Ditto - but note the homophony of *Kongzijiao* 孔子教, the “Teachings of Confucius”, with *Kongzijiao* 孔教. See also p. 74, footnote 35.

may already have entered Christian communities without having altered their pagan habits, but who were regarded by their former fellow believers of the Xing-li movement as traitors, and therefore in danger of incurring harm. To distinguish between “good” and “bad” Christians was an impossible task, in particular since the inter-communal rivalry between religious movements often produced distorted pictures of truth.<sup>50</sup> In a personalised example, Ripa cites the case of the head of the Christian community of Yaotou 姚头 in Dong’e district (*Dong’e xian* 东阿县). The same *huizhang* Zhang was known to Ripa as a reliable, decent Christian, yet personal opponents from three other communities accused him of belonging to Liu Mingde’s sect. Ripa decided to accompany his friend, convinced of his innocence, and to his horror witnessed the damage which the enmity between the Christian communities had done to the Christian community at large. Ripa’s sorrowful conclusion was that “only God could read the innermost secrets of a human being”, while his message to those Christians - Chinese converts and European missionaries alike - who demanded tough punishment for suspected “traitors” was one of benevolence and reason.<sup>51</sup>

A great worry to the Christian missionaries was the tendency among White Lotus followers to infiltrate Christian communities by participating in collective baptisms. The effect of the mass conversions was decried by both missionary and official: “Beancurd Christians” (*doufu jiaotu* 豆腐家头) brought discord into the Christian community, and made the intelligence work of the police officials more difficult. Legal cases against Christians - genuine and “bean curd” - proliferated, with

---

<sup>50</sup> The worried words of Carlo da Castorano in his letter to Matteo Ripa are reproduced and translated in Appendix 1 of this thesis. See Michele Fatica (ed.), *Matteo Ripa, Giornale (1705-1724), Volume II (1711-1716)*, pp. 354-355.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 355.

local watchmen (*difang* 四方) denouncing anybody behaving in a suspicious manner.<sup>52</sup>

The eighteenth century produced a considerable degree of cross-fertilisation between Christianity and other popular religions. Missionary correspondence viewed the refusal to comply with the bulls condemning “pagan rites” as a major problem. In particular Christians of White Lotus background, “harvested” by means of mass conversions, clung more tenaciously to their cultural traditions than individually converted neophytes. In the words of Father M.F.Oliver:

[The European priests] made a point of lamenting that among those newly converted Christians many had stated to them that their customs were thoroughly Chinese, whereas the same converts also told me that they obeyed the teachings of the [church] as regards ancestors, tablets, etc. At a funeral in Jining conducted with sixty musicians and great financial expenditure there were certain brotherhoods who - despite being infidels - participated by disinterring their parents in order to re-inter them according to the rites of [our] God. Christians recited their prayers, and those who were not [Christians] carried out their own rites by erecting tablets to their forebears. On Holy Friday, in the church of Jining, the sectarians then had the audacity to announce before the priest and the assembled congregation that none of the former had really adopted the Christian faith, and that they only participated in the Eucharist and in the other sacraments fictitiously.<sup>53</sup>

The same missive continues with an account illustrating the exotic appeal which Christianity added to the array of popular syncretic thought in the late imperial period. Three men, two of whom - Li Yesi 李益世 and Zhan Chengjie 詹承吉 - had been baptised by Carlo Orazi de Castorano and by P. Nieto Diaz respectively and

---

<sup>52</sup> The term was used derogatorily by Carlo Orazi, when referring to the mass conversions of Francisco Nieto Díaz (1660-1739) in Shandong. Cf. R. G. Tiedemann “Christianity and Chinese ‘Heterodox Sects’”, p. 356.

a “beggar” merely named as Niu San “*huazi*” 三子乞 (‘Third son, ‘Little Beggar’ of the Niu family”),<sup>54</sup> who declared himself a firm Christian believer despite not having been baptised, approached the church of Linqing, in the capital of Linqing Subprefecture 臨清州 (bordering Zhili Province in a narrow strip of land in the west of Shandong) ...

... on the 28th day of February of the year 1718, at two o’clock of the day. One of the three carried two yellow cloth wrappers (*baofu* 包袱) on his back, a yellow paper hood covering his head ... The two proceeded in majestic strides and spoke with overbearing arrogance, saying that the Great Lord had sent them, and furthermore that bishop Della Chiesa should come out to receive the imperial mandate. The people present in the building wanted to bar the entrance, asking them what business they had, but they entered nevertheless, not disclosing anything but their claim that Della Chiesa was about to become emperor. By the time they had reached the inner room (*yaofang* 腰房) next to the kitchen, the others snatched away the sachet made of yellow paper and brought it to me. When I opened it, I discovered inside several red papers, covered in patterns devoid of form and meaning. At this very moment, the rascals pointed at the sachets, saying that they comprised a message (*danzi* 丹字) of the great master. In their stilted tone of voice they announced that it could not be touched unless candles of incense were lit to honour his lordship. I asked them inside, and after they had shown me (i.e. Carlo Orazi) their respect in accordance with their own symbolism, bowing thrice in front of what they believed to be the Sacred Image, ... I asked whence they had come. Upon which they answered that they had come from Macau, and that they had been sent by the Grand Master. When I asked them where Macau was situated, and how they had made their way to this city, they replied that Macau was not very

---

<sup>53</sup> M. F. Oliver to K. Stumpf (2 May 1718), in *Sinica Franciscana* VIII, pp. 960.

<sup>54</sup> This may of course also be the anagramic corruption of a real name, such as observed in the White Lotus rebellion of 1796 in Hubei. A leader with the real surname *Zhu* 朱 was known to the other followers as *Niu ba* 牛巴, two characters which form the *zhu* character when superimposed. Cf. J. J. M. de Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution*, p. 351.

far to the east of here [i.e. Linqing], somewhere in the districts of Boping and Chiping.<sup>55</sup> I asked them who the Grand Master was, and what it was that made him so great. They answered that it was a certain Yang Dele.<sup>56</sup>

Yang Dele 楊德樂 was a native of Chiping District, where he was born in 1687. When he had reached the age of thirty-one in 1718, he imitated the example of Jesus and declared himself Son of God, second person of the Trinity, come to judge the quick and the dead. For the offence of proclaiming to act on behalf of the dynasty, and for allocating official titles and honours, the state officials had him banished to Fujian in March 1718. Less than two years later, at the end of 1719, Yang Dele managed to return to his district of birth, with the help of his followers.

I asked about the purpose of their mission, and they ... opened the sachets, where - among other pieces of paper - there were some written characters: One began with [the name of the White Lotus patriarch] Liu Mingde, and the two others consisted of two coloured sheets - one in red, the other in yellow - depicting a variety of shapeless symbols. Among the latter were some loose indications relating to evil acts, and one piece describing how the three persons would be taking horses with red reins - ... the grand master on a horse with yellow reins - and with two whips to give to the devil.<sup>57</sup>

Having finished the audience, Orazi consulted with Bishop Della Chiesa, concluding that the case would have to be reported to the chief official of the subprefecture, the *zhizhou* 知州. In a similar occurrence, we read of a trial convened in Beijing during the last years of the eighteenth century.<sup>58</sup> State officials had arrested

---

<sup>55</sup> Boping 博平 and Chiping 齊平 are two district towns in the prefecture of Dongchangfu 東昌府, Shandong Province, not more than a couple of days' walking distance from Linqing.

<sup>56</sup> M. F. Oliver to K. Stumpf (2 May 1718), in *Sinica Franciscana* VIII, pp. 961-962.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 962.

<sup>58</sup> In any case after the death of the Qianlong emperor in 1796. Reported in the letter by A. Luigi da Signa, from Shanxi province, 7 March 1806. Recorded as APF document SC, series III, *Cina and Regni*

Christians and followers of other seditious cults, after a religious leader of unclear provenance had declared himself Patriarch of the Poor. As if the threat of further insurrection among the impoverished peasantry had not been sufficiently incriminating, we also learn that he claimed to be in possession of the imperial head cover of the deceased Qianlong ruler. This was tantamount to high treason, and led to the immediate apprehension of the religious leader, who was then chained and transported from the Huguang to the imperial capital for trial. The imperial government obviously wanted to preclude a repetition of the White Lotus uprisings of the preceding decade. The measures to be expected against the followers of sectarian movements deemed “heretical” were hence as harsh as possible. The official report by Emmanuele Conforti at the end of the eighteenth century observed that the town (*fu* 府) Ren’an counted numerous merchants among its Christian population. These were highly mobile, difficult to influence by the missionaries and prone to absorbing erroneous ideas about Christianity. Worse still, they tended to take their individualised, unorthodox beliefs to the markets and cities they frequented.<sup>59</sup> In this regard, conversion to Christianity followed the pattern of bigger groups - be it the “White Lotus” or other similar movements. These cases shed light on an interesting phenomenon: Christianity had become a movement largely independent of foreign guidance. The occasionally reporting foreign missionaries stood by in order to observe the spread of popular variants of a Christian cult they were no longer able to influence. Its popular success can thus be measured in the degree of emulation by competing cults.

---

*Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, folium 105 V. Regrettably, some passages of the document have faded to near illegibility.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. B. Willeke, “The Report of the Apostolic Visitation”, p. 228.

Whereas this chapter focused on overt manifestations of popular Christianity and on its place among other popular religious movements, the following chapter will analyse the underlying causes of Christianity's appeal to the religious public. The chapter will begin by attempting to shed light on the central themes of Christian soterology - sin and confession, soul and redemption - as seen from the converts' angle. It will proceed by analysing the role of healing and magic, visions of afterlife, attitudes towards apostasy, matrimony and divorce and finally - crucially - of the filial ties binding Christian individuals to their convert-ancestors and to their community in general.

## **Chapter 5: Peasant millenarianism and Christian theology**

### **1. *Guilt, sin, universal harmony***

Christianity shared one common objective with China's greater philosophical traditions: To reach beyond the confines of everyday life, in the quest for eternal truth, for the *Dao* 道. Christian pamphlets and translations of philosophical and theological nature were at first directed at the intellectual elite but had, by the beginning of the eighteenth century, captured a much broader audience familiar with the terminology of late imperial philosophical discourse.<sup>1</sup> A panoply of millenarian traditions expressed the yearnings of commoners during the later imperial period: Liberation of the soul,

---

<sup>1</sup> These apparent similarities often became evident in the titles adopted by the religious leaders, usually merging terms of respect commonly accepted throughout the religious system. Within the *Yiguandao* 一贯道 tradition, for instance, is known for employing spiritual names and titles also of Christian and Islamic origins. The leader of the *Xiantiandao* 先天道 ("Pre-Celestial Teaching", Cheng Congde 程 Congde of Hongdong District 洪洞县 in Shanxi Province was known as the "Sakyamuni Buddha" (*Shijia-fo* 释家佛) under the Daoist epithet "Lord Li Lao" (*Li Laojun* 李老君), as well as "Confucius come to Earth" (*Kongfuzi lincan* 孔夫子临凡); cf. Hou Jie and Fan Lizhu, *Zhongguo minzhong zongjiao yiship*. 157. Wu Peiyi sees a blurring of class distinctions as the main catalyst for a change in perceptions of "guilt" and "shame". See Wu Pei-yi 吴佩宜, "Self-Examination and the Confession of Sins in Traditional China", in: *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* XXXIX-1 (June 1979), p. 37.



combined with concrete socio-economic freedom for the peasantry.<sup>2</sup> Daoistic millenarianism echoed concepts which must have facilitated the understanding of the Christian concepts of the Trinity; the first Christian translators, for instance, directly borrowed the concept of the “Unity of the Three” (*san wei yi ti* 三維一帝) from Daoist cosmology.<sup>3</sup> The popularity of the Amitabha Buddha as the redeemer from earthly suffering united villagers from all across China. A first important point of cultural contact was hence the common belief that the gulf between the spiritual and the material worlds could be bridged by a mortal acting as mediator between humans and spirits. This belief goes beyond Daoist preoccupation with the physical, and may be a remnant of early poly-spiritual and shamanic cults.<sup>4</sup> Christian theology hinges on the soterological function of Christ, forming a symbolic bridge between the sinful world of mortals and Heaven. In contrast to Biblical thinking, most Chinese traditions seem ignorant of a concept of “sin”, emphasising instead the innate goodness of human nature and the ability to reform the wicked through education.<sup>5</sup> A Christian

---

<sup>2</sup> By the beginning of the eighteenth century, two Daoist schools had received an imperial monopoly over ordinations: the *Tianshidao* 天師道 (also known as *Zhengyidao* 正一經) administered ordinations in southern China, whereas the highly Buddhified *Quanzhendao* 闡真道 enjoyed this monopoly over the Chinese north. Visions of the Redeemer (*shenren* 神人, *zhenren* 真人) clutching on to a Celestial Document (*tianshu* 天書) symbolising his identity as the Lord Saviour of the World (*jiushizhu* 救世主) hark back to the Northern Song period. For more details, see Hans Küng and Julia Ching, *Christianity and Chinese Religions*, p. 148 ff. If formal Daoist movements had passed their prime, Daoism’s legacy within the popular religious universe had penetrated the teachings and practice of most other religious movements. See Richard Hon-chun Shek, “Millenarianism without Rebellion: The Huangtian Dao in North China”, in: *Modern China* VIII-3 (July 1982), pp. 305-336.

<sup>3</sup> See R. H. C. Shek, “Religion and Society”, pp. 71-76. For a concise analysis of Chinese interpretations of the Bible, cf. K. H. Ting, “The Chinese Christians’ Approach to the Bible”, in: *China Notes* XXI-2/3 (1991), pp. 623-628.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Zhao Zhongming 趙宗明, *Wushi, wushu, mijing - zhongguo wushu wenhua zhuzong* 巫師、巫術、秘經 - 中國巫術文化縱橫 (‘‘Shamans, sorcery, forbidden spaces - Traces of China’s culture of sorcery’’), Kunming: *Yunnan daxue chubanshe* 雲南大學出版社 (Yunnan University Press) 1993, pp. 84-96.

<sup>5</sup> The Mencian tradition of Confucianism in particular stresses the state of perfection at birth and the ability of education to rectify human error. The opening couplet of the *Sanzijing* 三才經 (‘‘Three Character Classic’’), used for popular education since the Song period, graphically underlines this fact: ‘‘At life’s very beginning, human nature is perfect’’ (三才之初，人性本善). Originated by Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200) and - probably - first published by Wang Yinglin 王應麟 (1223-1296), the *Sanzijing* has been edited on several occasions, though the Neo-Confucian classic always begins with

pamphlet from the early seventeenth century may serve as an example illustrating how the Christian soterological message was translated into a Confucian context.<sup>6</sup> Despite an otherwise thorough understanding of Christian principles, the author presents the concepts of sin and redemption in a thoroughly Mencian light: The original state of perfection (*ben-shan* 本善) was lost through “evil practice” (*xi-e* 习恶), resulting in the eviction from Paradise and the torments of earthly existence. Yet all human beings are, by the gracious nature of the Christian god, equipped with the desire (*liang-xin* 良心) and the innate ability to overcome this state of imperfection (*chao-xing zhi ming* 朝醒之命). Redemption is thus *earned* through the pursuit of Christianity’s beneficial teachings - thus assigning the (Confucian) role of “teacher” (*shi* 师) to the Christian missionary. An awkward moment for Western clerics arrived when having to account for the soterological status of a convert’s ancestors. Reminiscent of Paul’s ambiguous explanations to the first Greek congregations, any Chinese with a Confucian upbringing would find it hard to accept eternal bliss while one’s parents were languishing in hell. The same applied to Confucian worthies with an impeccable socio-ethical past (the “sages”, *sheng* 圣). Could they be punished for having been ignorant of a teaching which originated from the extreme reaches of the known world? These were problems the Confucian intellectuals debated in earnest with the Jesuit Worthies from the West (*xi-ru* 西儒). For Christian commoners, these questions were “academic” in the true sense of the word - remote from the

---

this verse. For an Englished version, see H. A. Giles (transl. and annot.), *Elementary Chinese: Santzuching*, Shanghai: Kelly & Walsh 1910.

<sup>6</sup> The mentioned document is Li Jiubiao’s *Kouduo richao* 口述日抄 (“Daily Record of Oral Exhortations”) published between 1630 to 1640 - the annotated conversations between Giulio Aleni and fellow Jesuit missionaries. I rely on the information provided by Erik Zürcher in his - yet unpublished - contribution “Confucian and Christian Religiosity in Late Ming China” for the *Symposium on the History of Christianity in China*, Hong Kong, 2-4 October 1996, p. 18 ff. Since the *Kouduo richao* and similar seventeenth-century tracts were still widely circulated during the following century, their influence on China’s Christian communities remained considerable. See also p. 269 ff. of this thesis (chapter on the “Christian sutras”).

mental universe of the tiller or workman. The key parallel to - and origin of - the Confucian system was the veneration of ancestry. During the eighteenth century it would become clear that Christianity's survival in China would depend on its ability to adapt to ancestral traditions.<sup>7</sup>

Conventionally, the absence of (original) sin is interpreted as one of the key separators between the Chinese and Western understanding of human nature.<sup>8</sup> The consequences for any Christian missionary enterprise were by necessity grave: Without sin as the main cause of rupture between God and the World there was no need for reconciliation with the Christian deity. Hence no need for repentance, confession and Eucharist.<sup>9</sup> Traditions of confession and atonement certainly existed within the Confucian elite.<sup>10</sup> But “sins” (*zui* 罪 or *guo* 過) in the commonly held understanding merely constituted *transgressions* against social, moral or legal conventions, and all sin could be atoned for in this world by re-establishing harmony among one's human relations. In the final analysis, there was no apparent need for a transcendental model delivering salvation, indeed for redemption as such.<sup>11</sup> This does not imply that converts lacked interest in a better life following their earthly existence. On the contrary, we repeatedly encounter the statement of wishing to “be certain to

---

<sup>7</sup> For more insight into the relevance of ancestry in literati thought see Nicolas Standaert, *Yang Tingyun*, p. 128 ff. A contemporary parallel to this crucial observation can be found in the research by David Jordan, with the focus on popular religious traditions in Taiwan. See David Jordan, *Gods, Ghosts, and Ancestors*, pp. 87-102. Nicole Constable's research has produced insight into Christian surrogates for the traditional ancestral rites. See her “The Village of Humble Worship - Religion and Ethnicity in a Hakka Protestant Community in Hong Kong”, PhD thesis: University of California 1989, pp. 1-14 and 188 ff.

<sup>8</sup> Emphasised, for instance, in Zhuo Xinpin, “The Concept of Original Sin in the Cultural Encounter between East and West”, in: Philip Wickeri and Lois Cole, *Christianity and Modernization: A Chinese Debate*, Hong Kong: DAGA Press 1995, pp. 91-101.

<sup>9</sup> A fact much lamented by the few Western priests who had remained in China, such as the Mgr. Pottier (MEP). See Léonide Guiot, *La Mission du Su-tchuen au XVIII<sup>me</sup> siècle*, p. 274.

<sup>10</sup> See Wu Pei-yi, “Self-Examination and the Confession of Sins”, pp. 22-28 on the “Confucian confessional”.

<sup>11</sup> See Zhuo Xinpin, “The Concept of Original Sin”, pp. 93 and 97-99; also Wolfram Eberhard, *Guilt and Sin in Traditional China*, Berkeley: University of California Press 1967.

ascend to heaven” (*biding yao shengtian* 必登要聖天). The precise quality of this pronouncement remains, however, unexplained. Within the context of religious life during the mid-Qing period, the connotation may very well have been akin to the Buddhist aspiration to escape the cycle of reincarnation by reaching Nirvana.<sup>12</sup> Tired of the tribulations of daily life in arid fields and along endless canals, many tillers and toilers looked ahead to a better form of existence following the end of earthly life. Despite major theological and socio-philosophical differences, most millenarian sects in the mid-Qing regarded “heaven” and “the sun” as symbols of future bliss.<sup>13</sup>

Further evidence suggesting a reluctance of Chinese Christians to confess their sins stems from a letter by the Propaganda missionary Jean Joseph Ghislain, CM (*Ji Deming* 紀德明) on the policies of the incumbent bishop of Beijing.<sup>14</sup> For several years, the Church had forbidden non-confessing Christians to participate in the Eucharist. In order to reveal the identity of Christians, who habitually refrained from confessing their trespassings, the letter explains, the bishop adopted a policy of coercion in order to force unrepentant Christians to comply with the Catholic tradition: Confessing parishioners would receive a “ticket” (*billet de confession*), enabling the clergy to keep detailed statistical accounts concerning the frequency of confession and absolution. In cases of non-attendance, parishioners were registered

---

<sup>12</sup> Gleaned from the confessions of the Christian Manchurians Yintang and Yinsi, in their defence against accusations of high treason, in 1726. See *Wenxian congbian*, “The Case against Yinsi and Yintang”, p. 5.

<sup>13</sup> See Ma Xisha 馬希沙, “Minjian zongjiao jiushi sixiang de yanbian 民間宗教九十思想的演變” (“The evolution of soterological thinking in popular Chinese religion”), in: *Zhongguo shehuikexueyuan yanjiushengyuan xuebao* 中國社會科學院研究員學報, 1995-4, pp. 44-50, in particular chapter three on Maitreyism.

<sup>14</sup> Ghislain was a member of the *Congrégation de la Mission* and missionary apostolic. The letter was sent from Beijing to Paris on 6-11-1806, with a copy directed to the Propaganda authorities. See APF SC, series III, *Cina et Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, ff. 187-188. The fact that this letter was authored towards the very end of the period of missionary prohibition in the immediate vicinity of the court missionaries is revealing, for it shows the persistence of traditional concepts after several decades of Christian propagation.

and penitential exercises imposed, combined with regular acts of contrition and periods of seclusion.

Ghislain's letter continues with the remark that these coercive methods proved useless, in particular since the measures instilled fear rather than trust. Most Christians in the capital were poor and lived among non-believers, which made it virtually impossible to attend mass during times of increased vigilance by the state. The strict measures which the Chinese government had adopted to prevent Christians from entering missionary premises did indeed form a formidable deterrent against church attendance: Soldiers had been posted in front of Beijing's church gates, the female oratories were closed, houses searched at random. The distribution of confession tickets were counterproductive even from a different angle, since the practice imperilled those Christians who had participated in confessions against the prohibitions of the state. For this reason, the letter concludes, the Portuguese *padres* had been opposed to the idea from the outset.<sup>15</sup> Pressure by the state thus seems to have succeeded in intimidating Chinese Christians in the congregations of the capital. But the reluctance to attend confessions antedated the prohibition of the early 1800s, leaving us to consider factors of a more profound nature - specifically whether Christians understood what the function of absolution was, and the consequences of "private" moral transgressions, which no other person witnessed. Rather than attempting to escape the vigilant eyes of "heathen" neighbours, it seems that a desire for confession and absolution could not be assumed a natural outcome of conversion - stubborn reminders that inculturated Christianity resulted in practices which could differ substantially from the orthodoxy of eighteenth century Catholicism.

---

<sup>15</sup> ... as opposed to their (mostly French) rivals from the Propaganda contingent.

## 2. Healing and black magic

The abstract concept of redemption in the Greco-Judaic tradition is complemented by the concrete figure of the Holy Man, who is both a link to the spiritual dimension and healer of this-worldly injustice and disease.<sup>16</sup> This dual role of the *soter* may explain why Christian missionaries were sought after as providers of pharmaceutical substances - in competition with other soterological traditions.<sup>17</sup> In the earliest Chinese records, the task to unite the spiritual world with that of the mortals (*shen-ren heyi* 神人合一) was a cultic function executed by the court shaman.<sup>18</sup> In the wake of the gradual Confucianisation of China's aristocratic courts, this transcendental office was taken over by the ruler himself - as the *tianzi* 天子, Son of Heaven, while Heaven remained the ultimate master over the entire cosmic order (*tian-ren heyi* 天人合一).<sup>19</sup> To preserve harmony (*datong* 大同) was hence both a religious as well as a political imperative of the ruler.<sup>20</sup> Failing to carry out this

---

<sup>16</sup> For aspects of early Christianity, see Peter Brown's article "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity", in Jochen Martin and Barbara Quint, *Christentum und Antike Gesellschaft*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 1990, pp. 391-439 - in particular pp. 417 and 429. For an investigation of African traditions of "healing", see C. Nyamiti, *Christ as our Ancestor*, pp. 55-57. "Healing" in traditional China is analysed in Hans Küng and Julia Ching, *Christianity and Chinese Religions*, pp. 163-167.

<sup>17</sup> The tendencies of popular religiosity in late antiquity - mystery cults, fear of demonic influence and of disease - are summarised in Alois Kehl, "Antike Volksfrömmigkeit und das Christentum", in: Martin and Quint, *Christentum und Antike Gesellschaft*, pp. 108-119.

<sup>18</sup> The shaman (*wu* 巫) could originally be male or female, though male sorcerers (*wu* 巫) were increasingly preferred, also a sign of ascending Confucianism's patriarchal hegemony. From the end of the Warring States period onwards, the sorcerer was replaced by the *shi* 史, who had the twofold task of predicting the future and of recording the events of the past. Cf. Zhao Zhongming, *Wushi, wushu, mijing*, pp. i ff, 1, 28-30. An interesting study of shamanistic-priestly functions (i.e. the healing, redeeming, prophesying, exorcising and blessing of believers) and the charismatic Christian churches of modern Korea is Sang-Chan Han, *Beziehungen zwischen dem Schamanismus und dem Verständnis des Heiligen Geistes in der protestantischen Kirche in Korea: Religionsphänomenologische und missionstheologische Untersuchungen*, Hamburg: Verlag an der Lottbek 1991. See in particular pp. 35-41 and 136-153.

<sup>19</sup> The characters used as imperial titles - *wang* 王, *huang* 皇 or *dì* 帝 - all have spiritual connotations, indicating that the ruler, as Supreme Shaman (*taizhu* 太主), was in charge of all political and all spiritual activities within the empire. For more information on the early role of the emperor, see in Zhao Zhongming, *Wushi, wushu, mijing*, p. 29 ff.

<sup>20</sup> The terminology used by the early Christian missionaries reflected the desire to assume a truly pontifical role. The use of Daoist and Buddhist models, however, produced misunderstandings, and gave rise to unmistakably "Christian" terms: *sa-ze-er-duo-de* 撒加大德, for the Romance

imperative could result in Heaven abrogating its mandate (*tianming* 天命) through natural calamities and popular unrest.<sup>21</sup> Millenarian movements thrived on the conviction that they acted as agents of Heaven, in their struggle to restore cosmic harmony and to destroy the temporal rulers. Their leaders, but also apolitical popular healers, claimed to form a bridge between cosmic forces and humanity, and were therefore targeted by the Confucian state.<sup>22</sup> Even itinerant quacks could thus be perceived by the state as a menace to public order and a threat to the monopoly of the emperor as the *pontifex* between Heaven and the empire. This affected soterological cults popular in northern China among barren women and the sick, such as the Red Yang Cult (*Hongyangjiao* 紅陽教),<sup>23</sup> as well as Christian missionaries selling pharmaceutical substances to improve their finances. The general prohibition against Christian missionaries performing medical functions was reiterated in imperial decrees throughout the eighteenth century. A letter sent to the Propaganda in the year 1805 mentions the *Decreto del Emperador de la China* of the same year, which clearly stated that “diabolical medicines” were under no circumstances to be

---

*sacerdote*, simplified to *siduode* 司道 or *siduo* 司道; later the honorific *shenfu* 神父 “Spiritual Father” became common currency. See F. Margiotti, *Il cattolismo nello Shansi*, pp. 459-460.

<sup>21</sup> Known as *geming* 革命, the modern term for “revolution”. One of the clearest references to the accountability of the ruler to his celestial origin is a passage in the *Mozi* 墨子: “If there is fault anywhere [in the empire], then the ruler himself is at fault” (苟有君而不肖者, 則天下之歸之者, 猶水之就下, 不可止也). See Burton

Watson (transl.), *Mo-Tzu - Basic Writings*, New York and London: Columbia University Press 1963, section “Lian’ai” 兼愛 (“All-Embracing Love”), pp. 39-49.

<sup>22</sup> Lin Zhaoen attained wide-spread support through his *genbei* 艮背 method of inner alchemy and the ensuing performance of miracle healings. See K. Dean, *Lord of the Three in One*, pp. 106-107 and 129 and R. H. C. Shek, “Religion and Society”, pp. 67-69.

<sup>23</sup> The Hongyang cult, with all its diverse offshoots, developed into a most influential religious movement of the late imperial period. Though the cult had attained wide popularity by the middle of the Jiaqing period, official records often perceived the Hongyang cult as an expression of the “Eight Trigrams” (*Baguajiao* 八卦教) or of the “White Lotus” (*Bailianjiao* 白蓮教) teachings. *Hongyang* followers could be found in abundance within the banner troops and among the Manchurian aristocracy. For more information see Qin Baoqi, *Zhongguo dixia shehui*, pp. 479-495, as well as R. H. C. Shek, “Religion and Society”, pp. 276-287.



distributed among the people, neither by Europeans nor by Chinese.<sup>24</sup> The missionaries were caught between the desire to act as helpers, in the process of “saving” the local heathens from bodily and metaphysical harm, and the fact that they competed with the traditional providers of medication and authority: Doctors, healers and the local literati. Christian missionaries were thus, wittingly or not, perpetuating rumours of magical healing being used as a ruse for attracting commoners to sectarian movements. Imperial officials would seize on the distribution of medical drugs as examples of nefarious activity. A memorial of the year 1805 enumerates the moral monstrosities of one Sun Dan’gan 孙丹干, leader of the *Qiaoqiao* 巧巧 sect. In the case of this Maitreyan movement, the distribution of medical herbs was reportedly intended to lure honourable women into sexual promiscuity - an allegation readily believed and vilified by significant sections of contemporary society, including the reporting official.<sup>25</sup> Against this background, the potential for harmful speculation against Christian missionaries involved in the administration of medical drugs was momentous.

The letter by Gioacchino Salvetti (OFM, 1769-1843), sent from the *carceri di Cantone* in December 1806 provides an example of how medicines attracted ordinary commoners to the missionaries. The reported incident, however, portrayed the missionary as the victim of a ruse: Having been accosted by a man pretending to be in desperate need of medicine, Gioacchino arranged to see the patient and potential convert. The latter excused himself, exchanged some words with a local prostitute (*una di quelle qui si dicono buone donne*), who departed within moments of having

---

<sup>24</sup> Composed JQ 10/5/15, i.e. 12-6-1805 - the edict which would ignite the persecutions of the year 1805. See APF SOCP, *Indie Orientali*, 1817, folium 33 R (referring to article 10 of the edict).

<sup>25</sup> De Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution*, p. 406, after *Shengxun* 99. The memorialising official is cited as Fang Weidian 方维典.

been approached. And before the missionary knew what had happened, members of the yamen police force apprehended him, in order to imprison the priest for the illegal activities of proselytisation and the sale of medical preparations.<sup>26</sup> The Vatican itself was also aware of the dubious quality of pharmaceutical commerce for the propagators of the faith. On the one hand, the mundane task of sustaining one's livelihood had been acknowledged since the beginnings of the mission - grants from Europe and the permission to raise rental income through buildings erected by missionaries bear witness to this. On the other hand, missionaries were keen to be regarded as morally superior representatives of a belief stressing justice and the absence of avarice; the pursuit of commercial gain was thus hardly concomitant with these lofty aims.<sup>27</sup> The arrest of the Chinese priest Peter Ly in the year 1805, while selling medicine in a public square in the capital, led to renewed tension between state officials and missionaries, to the detriment of the public standing of the Church. The Vatican hence reiterated its prohibition on commercial activities involving medicines of any kind.<sup>28</sup> The prohibition seems to have had only limited effect, since in November of the same year, a former Jesuit missionary (here referred to as a certain *Bernardo*) was caught selling a preparation referred to as *mi hung tang*, of which we learn that it was regarded by gentiles as a drug which debilitated the human willpower, with the effect of inducing its consumers to be disposed favourably towards the

---

<sup>26</sup> Gioacchino was later offered to apostatise by walking over a crucifix. He refused, was kept in solitary confinement, but was treated well and, obviously, able to communicate with the outside world. The experience of the Franciscan Gioacchino Salvetti (Chinese name *Ai* 艾 or *Jin* 金 *Ruoyajing* 如意经) is reported in APF SC, *Indie Orientali/Cina*, 1806-1811, ff. 241-242, where he is simply referred to as "Father Giovacchino" (*sic*).

<sup>27</sup> A letter by Nathanaël Burger, Vicar Apostolic of Taiyuan, of August 1779 contains interesting information on the "scandalous" involvement of a Chinese priest in the twilight zone between commercial and criminal activity. Filed at the APF as SC, *Indie Orientali/Cina*, 1779-1781, ff. 127-130.

<sup>28</sup> A letter of the year 1806 highlights the consequences of the 1805 persecution for the Christians in the capital. See APF document SOCP, *Indie Orientali*, 1806-1811, folium 23.

Christian sect.<sup>29</sup> When, during a widespread persecution six years later, the state officials in Beijing confiscated the belongings of the missionary congregations, they also seized medical preparations and instruments imported during the Kangxi years, which had accompanied the daily work of the missionaries for almost one hundred years. The seizure of medical equipment can thus also be seen as the symbolic end of the missionaries' role in the capital as healers of both body and soul.

While Chinese officials acted against missionaries who drew capital out of the “stultifying effects” (*shanhuo renxin* 山火人心) of miracle healings, and those who exploited the “stupidity” of women desperate for children, their allegations were extended to the distribution of writings in Latin script (*xiyang fanzi* 西洋番字), which were used by Christians as religious decoration (*gua-hua* 挂画).<sup>30</sup> This was certainly not due to their contents but rather to the magical importance allocated to the script and to chanted formulas.<sup>31</sup> Even to Christian converts, items of Christian literature were hardly more than rudimentary fragments of a greater system transmitted by wise, yet alien men. Such “fragments” of the Christian faith were then memorised by commoners, such as the manual labourer with the name He Guoda 何瓜达, an eighteenth century migrant worker whom we will meet again in the following part of this thesis.<sup>32</sup> The migrant worker's frequent references to revelations from his nightly dreams indicate that the Christian imagery offered substantial

---

<sup>29</sup> *Mi hung tang*, cioè acqua, che fa ... impazzare. Reported in a letter by Luigi da Signa, Shanxi province 1806. Cf. APF document SC, series III, *Cina and Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, folium 107 R. The term itself may mean “Sweet Red Wine Drink” (*mi-hong-tang* 蜜紅湯), or perhaps simply “Secret Concoction” (*mi huntang* 秘 huntang).

<sup>30</sup> Here we have two brief memorials dealing with the discovery of Christian scriptures in Latin script in Hubei province. The memorials were sent by the circuit official for Hubei, Heng Wen, in QL 16/6/15 and QL 16/8/30, i.e. 6/8/1751 and 18/10/1751, respectively. See FHA document 493 (scroll 9258), numbers 28 and 29, frames 376-379.

<sup>31</sup> A similar Christian source from the late Ming period, combining instances of miraculous healing with detailed instructions as how to exorcise evil spirits, is analysed in E. Zürcher, “The Lord of Heaven and the Demons”, pp. 357-376.

<sup>32</sup> He Guoda's case is discussed in greater detail on pp. 275-289.

attraction to non-Christians with religious inclinations.<sup>33</sup> In confidential conversations with a certain Xie Defu, He Guoda expressed a profound interest in “black magic” (*fashu* 法術), for which he had gained a reputation during his brief sojourn in Longmentan. Already in his youth he recalled having used peachwood strips to “exorcise” (*zhenzhi* 鎮紙) the cause of a disease plaguing his maternal uncle. Now he used this knowledge in combination with Christian scriptures which had been offered to him during his stay in Sichuan.<sup>34</sup> He Guoda’s interest in “black magic” was a common element of popular religious life. It was seen by the Confucian state as a threat to orthodoxy, and hence also featured in the legal code of the Qing empire. “Sorcery” (*wu* 巫) was indeed a commonplace accusation used by state officials to discredit heterodox movements. From a memorial submitted in the thirteenth year of the Yongzheng period we learn of Zhili provincial Li Fu 李福 and his son Li Juncheng 李俊成, “whose incantations could make the clouds bring forth rain, and whose curses could fell trees”. Most worryingly for the state, they were masters of the martial arts, stored weaponry in their homes, and had even built up a nomenclature based on the military hierarchy of the Qing. Using secret sutras and amulets, paintings and sculptures to perform black magic, cult leaders such as the Li were able to attract large followings among the “bewitched” peasantry. The latter protected their shepherd through loyalty and silence - reinforced by the remoteness of their villages, which were often set deeply in difficult mountain terrain.<sup>35</sup> Demonised in official

---

<sup>33</sup> We know that Wang Lun 王倫, founder of the Pure Water (*Qingshui* 清淨) sect, derived the essence of his vision from dreams. See Naquin, *Shantung Rebellion*, p. 38 ff. On the role of shamanic visions in contemporary Taiwan (Daoist ‘intervention gods’), see also Stephan Feuchtwang, *The Imperial Metaphor - Popular Religion in China*, London: Routledge 1992, p. 141 ff.

<sup>34</sup> 法術之書，見《大清會典事例》卷一百一十五，頁一。See FHA, scroll 9258, original number 492, sub-numbers 19-20, frames 339-344, memorial dated QL 39/4/12 (i.e. 21/5/1774).

<sup>35</sup> The same memorial creates the impression that the lapsed Christian was also preparing for an armed uprising:

法術之書，見《大清會典事例》卷一百一十五，頁一。See FHA, scroll 9258, original number 492, sub-numbers 19-20, frames 339-344, memorial dated QL 39/4/12 (i.e. 21/5/1774).



had access to the local printing blocks.<sup>40</sup> Both advantages were frequently exploited in order to spread beliefs encouraging or running counter to rumours about particular religious communities. Mendicant monks from Buddhist monasteries had been the focus of popular speculations for centuries. Such priests were habitually ridiculed as lacking in intelligence and ordinary human feelings.<sup>41</sup> But at times, such as during the eighteenth century, itinerant monks were also feared: Rumours circulated through terrified tracts of countryside that monks had cast spells on the inhabitants and the livestock of villages which they passed through. In certain regions, such rumours ignited sheer mass paranoia, with dangerous consequences for any of the assumed culprits.<sup>42</sup> For the nineteenth century, this group of small town and village intellectuals played a definitive role in the thousands of confrontations between rural communities and Christian missionaries, providing ammunition for rumours such as baby-snatching, immoral acts between adults of both genders and children, and the extraction of eyes for alchemical purposes.<sup>43</sup> During this period, the state turned rumours about nefarious practices attributed to Western missionaries, such as the eating of babies and the use of their eyes for magical potions, into a powerful

---

<sup>40</sup> The term “petty intelligentsia” (*xiaozhishifenzi* 小知识分子) is mostly used in an urban, twentieth century context. But in an expanded sense, this social group also existed during the late imperial period, encompassing commoners with special skills (yamen scribes, public letter writers), monks and itinerant professionals (such as doctors, merchants and actors). See David Strand, *Rickshaw Beijing*, pp. 168-170. For a brief introduction to the development and relevance of Chinese printing see Frances Wood, *Chinese Illustration*, London: British Library 1985, as well as B. Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology*, pp. 140-159 (on book publishing in the Jiangnan).

<sup>41</sup> *Renqing* 人情 - mostly referring to the desire to found a family. See Meir Shahar, *Crazy Ji - Chinese Religion and Popular Literature*, Cambridge / Massachusetts: Harvard University Press 1998, p. 37 ff.

<sup>42</sup> Graphically illustrated by Philip A. Kuhn in *Soulstealers - The Chinese Sorcery Scare of 1768*, Cambridge / Massachusetts: Harvard University Press 1990.

<sup>43</sup> See Cheng Xiao and Zhang Ming, “Wanqing xiangshehui de yangjiaoguan” (“The Perception of Christianity by Village Society”), pp. 108-116. See also an episode from the year 1732, referring to popular rumours about the nature of extreme unction, as reported in F. Margiotti, *Il cattolicesimo nello Shansi*, p. 366.

propaganda tool.<sup>44</sup> The sheer number of foundlings baptised - and adopted into Christian orphanages if they survived - was sufficient to give rise to such rumours. For the year 1806 alone, the missionaries in the province of Sichuan reported nearly 7,000 baptisms of foundlings, as opposed to 1,371 adult christenings and 1,760 baptisms of infants.<sup>45</sup> The popular attraction of “sorcery” was a potential waiting to be utilised by sectarian leaders wishing to explore untrodden paths for the recruitment of disciples. Less than two generations later, the charismatic leader of a popular movement which nearly destroyed the ruling Qing, would also derive his inspiration from such “revelations”. Visions were indeed a common feature of popular religiosity, a potential source of attraction waiting to be exploited.<sup>46</sup> The man in question, Hong Xiuquan 洪秀全, used his rudimentary grasp of Christian theology to create his own spirituality, which was to form the basis of the ideology of the millenarian Taiping 太平 movement.<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>44</sup> Rumours about “hairy demons” rapaciously internalising the vital organs of boys and girls, and sometimes their whole bodies, had deep roots in certain areas of China. The imperial histories of the Tang and Song furthermore report of popular self-defence movements against allegedly sighted “hairy men”. The parallels between the perception of Westerners in nineteenth century China and these ancient beliefs are obvious. A thorough investigation into the cultural connotations of bodily hair can be found in Frank Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China*, London: Hurst 1992, pp. 14-15, 44-47 and 138-142. See also his contribution “Racial Discourse in China: Continuities and Permutations”, in: F. Dikötter and B. Sautman (eds), *The Construction of Racial Identities in China and Japan*, London: Hurst 1997, pp. 16 and 17.

<sup>45</sup> These figures derive from the Vicar Apostolic Dufresse, and refer to the 53 Christian communities visited by him in Sichuan province. Most of the found children died within days - which also meant that they disappeared from public view and entered the world of popular imagination. Cf. APF file SC, series III, *Cina et Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, ff. 207-208. See also Pierre Heude SJ, *La compagnie de Jésus en Chine - Le Kiang-nan en 1869*, Paris: E. de Soye 1870, p. 11: *Car la plus grande accusation qui pèse sur nous, c'est que nous mangeons les enfants, et qu'avec les yeux et leur coeur nous faisons des pillules au moyen desquelles nous ensorcelons le public, spécialement les femmes.*

<sup>46</sup> A general introduction to the theme of popular religious traditions can be found in Pieter Hendrick Vrijhof and Jacques Waardenburg, *Official and Popular Religion - Analysis of a Theme for Religious Studies*, The Hague: Houton 1979. See also the - hitherto unpublished - conference papers of the annual conference of the British Association for Chinese Studies, London 6 September 2000, devoted to the theme(s) of “Dreams and Inspiration” in Chinese culture.

<sup>47</sup> The connection between Christianity and Taiping ideology has been explored by Eugene Powers Boardman, *Christian Influence upon the Ideology of the Taiping Rebellion, 1851-1864*, New York: Octagon Books 1964 and more recently, by Rudolf G. Wagner, in *Reenacting the Heavenly Vision: The Role of Religion in the Taiping Rebellion*, Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies 1984. See also Robert P. Weller, *Unities and Diversities in Chinese Religion*, Basingstoke / London: MacMillan 1987.

The above examples allow us to distil the ideological essence of the vehement opposition of the scholar-official elite to the leaders of popular religious movements. Both groups utilised ritual conventions in order to emphasise the claim of having been endowed with the celestial authority to rule. Leaders of millenarian movements as well as hermitic masters of black magic routinely fulfilled rituals illustrating their role of *pontifex* between a supreme cosmic order and the human world, the power to heal illnesses and to eradicate earthly misery, as well as the ability to perform miracles. The Confucian-educated elite, in an extension of the emperor's role as the "father-and-mother" of the people, perceived itself as "natural rulers" sanctioned by Heaven. In parallel fashion to the leaders of popular cults, the scholar-officials thus claimed to hold the key for the implementation of an ideal celestial order, if only the people would allow the imperial government to do so, abandoning the superstitious rituals which led innocent countryfolk astray from the righteous path.<sup>48</sup> The explanation for the conflict between sectarian leaders and state officials thus lies in the overlap of perceived functions, creating an intense competition for support among the populace. Christianity, during most of the period in question, formed an integral part of the "sectarian" side of this rivalry. The Confucian state regarded the Christian attempts to heal the rift between the Master of Heaven and the sinful earthlings, as well as the clergy's dealings in surgery and pharmaceuticals, as equally harmful methods of winning the hearts of simple-minded villagers. As a powerful competitor to the

---

For more details concerning the "charismatic" elements of Shangdihui 上帝會 and Taiping see Wang Qingcheng 王慶成, *Tianfu tianxiong shengzhi* 天父天兄聖旨 ("Sacred edicts by the Celestial Father and Celestial Elder Brother"), *Liaoning renmin chubanshe* 遼寧人民出版社 1986, p. 18 as well as Hou Jie and Fan Lizhu, *Zhongguo minzhong zongjiao yishi*, pp. 297-298.

<sup>48</sup> Stephan Feuchtwang has provided a detailed and thematic analysis of the sacrificial duties of state officials, distinguishing between Great (*dasi* 大祀), Middle (*zhongsi* 中祀) and Common Sacrifice (*qunsi* 群祀). See S. Feuchtwang, "School-Temple and City God", in: G. William Skinner, *The City in Late Imperial China*, Stanford: Stanford University Press 1977, pp. 585-587.



scholar-officials, Christianity had thus become an integral part of the religious movements perceived as a menace to the rule of the scholar-official elite.

### 3. *Death and afterlife*

In the first section of this chapter we reached the conclusion that popular religious life functioned without the concepts of “sin” and “redemption”, two pillars of Christian theology. Late imperial religion was however strongly influenced by popular interpretations of Buddhism which provided an elaborate transcendental system for rewarding the good and for punishing wickedness. Some teachings, such as one sixteenth century rival of the Luo cult, offered their disciples the prospect of being reborn into Heaven, after a symbolic period of rest.<sup>49</sup> An evil earthy life could be atoned for by going through a subterranean purgatory (the “earth prison” *diyu* 地獄).<sup>50</sup> The sinner’s sentence was seen as commensurate with the total balance of one’s good deeds and sins, which were summed up by a member of the infernal bureaucracy just as a merchant would list credit and debit notes on his balance sheet.<sup>51</sup> For a time-span of cosmic duration, the sinner was then allocated one of the various

---

<sup>49</sup> See D. Overmyer, *Precious Volumes*, pp. 211-212. The *baojuan* referred to here is the *Xiaoshi yuanjue baojuan* 小時元覺寶卷 (“The precious volume that explains complete enlightenment”, reprinted in *ibidem*, appendix H, text 3, pp. 311-312).

<sup>50</sup> For the influence of Buddhism and Daoism on popular notions of hell, cf. Hou Jie and Fan Lizhu, *Zhongguo minzhong zongjiao yishi*, p. 145, as well as Anne Swann Goodrich, *Chinese Hells: The Peking Temple of Eighteen Hells and Chinese Conceptions of Hell*, St. Augustin: Monumenta Serica 1981. Henri Doré, *Recherches sur les superstitions en Chine* (vol. VI): *Le Panthéon Chinois*, Shanghai 1914 systematically introduces the numerous celestial and infernal officials populating afterlife.

<sup>51</sup> “Points” could be gained by leading a meritorious life (*gong* 功), whereas evil thoughts and deeds (*guo* 過) brought infernal retribution. See Wolfram Eberhard, *Guilt and Sin in Traditional China*, p. 19 ff. Some of his ideas are reiterated in Wolfram Eberhard, *Moral and Social Values of the Chinese - Collected Essays*, Taipei: Ch’engwen Publications 1971. Nicolas Standaert sees such considerations as a reflection of life in the world of the living - an observation not exclusive to Chinese culture. See N. Standaert, “Chinese Christian Visits to the Underworld”, p. 65.

[illegible]

Christian doctrine by local church elders, but were always regarded as being subject to the ultimate judgement of the Christian Lord of Heaven. In certain sources reflecting popular Christian beliefs, the concept of the *gong-guo ge* is clearly visible.<sup>56</sup> This pattern of reward for an earthly life of ritual compliance coincided with late imperial popular practice, where both the infernal and the celestial afterlife were governed by a strictly hierarchised body of the Yellow Emperor's officials.<sup>57</sup> Images of hell and purgatory, vividly described by Mediterranean missionaries of rural background, served to complement this panoply of punishment and torture.<sup>58</sup> It is, in fact, documented that preachers describing the trials of hell attracted large audiences, and eventually converts.<sup>59</sup> The Christian missionaries thus fitted the mould of popular Buddhist proselytisation.<sup>60</sup> Letters sent by Western missionaries back to Europe confirm that many missionaries, such as Philip Huang educated at the *Collegio de' Cinesi* in Naples, had acquired a fiery style of preaching, which was seen as the result of emulating the almost operatic sermons performed on the public squares of southern Italy during the eighteenth century. These parallels helped to attract converts, but also blurred the distinctions between the two religious systems. For the descendants of

---

grape wine was imported via Macau, since rice wines were not recognised as permissible for the Eucharist. See Léonide Guiot, *La Mission du Su-tchuen au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, pp. 186-187.

<sup>56</sup> The anonymous *Tianzhu shenpan mingzheng* 天竺神判明正 (‘A clear proof of judgement by the Master of Heaven’) is one such example. See Nicolas Standaert, ‘Chinese Christian Visits to the Underworld’, p. 61.

<sup>57</sup> Readers of *Journey to the West* encounter concrete examples of this post-mortal bureaucracy in Monkey's descent to Hell. See Wu Cheng'en 吳承恩 (1500-1582), *Xiyouji* 西遊記, first published around 1570. See also the English translation by W. J. F. Jenner, *Journey to the West*, Beijing: Foreign Languages Press 1984.

<sup>58</sup> See Giacomo di Fiore, *Lettere di Missionari dalla Cina (1761-1775)*, pp. 94-95.

<sup>59</sup> The archives of the *Congregation of the Sacred Family* in Naples provide clear evidence, such as in the letters sent from China by the Chinese disciple Philip Huang of the Roman procurator for Macau, Emiliano Palladini. Excerpts are reprinted in G. Di Fiore, ‘Emiliano Palladini e i missionari del Collegio dei Cinesi’, ‘Emiliano Palladini e i missionari del Collegio dei Cinesi’, in: F. d'Arelli and A. Tamburello, *La Missione Cattolica in Cina*, pp. 263-264.

<sup>60</sup> See Philip A. Kuhn, *Soulstealers*, p. 105 ff.

missionary converts, the subtleties setting Christian concepts of afterlife apart from those of rival cults must have seemed even fainter.<sup>61</sup>

Funerary rituals had diverse functions: To express the children's piety towards their deceased parents, to tie the village community more closely together, and to provide the spiritual precautions for the deceased soul's passage into the unknown. Adherence to the conventions of funerary ritual formed a crucial part of the process of social identification - often made to coincide with the coming of age of the younger generation, but also an important occasion for accepting outsiders into the village community.<sup>62</sup> Participating in these communal rituals of their local society at times proved to be a problem for Chinese Christians - even before the Vatican's verdict on the Rites Controversy.<sup>63</sup> One of the most persistent problems, in this context, was the question of whether heathens should be invited to Christian funerals. Should they then be allowed to kow-tow in front of a Christian's ancestral tablet, or perform even more outspoken examples of gentile practices prohibited to Christians? After all, it is recorded that great numbers of gentiles participated in the funerary procession of the

---

<sup>61</sup> See F. Margiotti, *Il cattolicesimo nello Shansi*, pp. 442-446 for examples of conflicts caused by religious processions. The documents consulted for this thesis, however, seem to indicate that such conflicts were not commonplace during the eighteenth century.

<sup>62</sup> This refers in particular to the custom of the entire village population "coming out together" after seven days of mourning, in an act of collective grief. Similarly, the villagers mark the day of their dead collectively on the occasion of the *Qingming* 清明 festival. Regular fasting and a well-publicised reverence for the beliefs and customs of the dead perpetuated a pretence that the deceased was still part of the community of the living. Occasionally, this would be taken to extremes by "infernal weddings" (*minghun* 冥婚) arranged for deceased bachelors and spinsters. For more information on the relationship between family and village rituals, see David Jordan, *Gods, Ghosts, and Ancestors*, pp. 134-138. Jordan has more on "ghost marriages" and "spirit brides" on pp. 140-155 (see also the picture of two "spirit brides" on p. 145). A general background can be found in James L. Watson and Evelyn S. Rawski, *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China*, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press 1988, in particular in the chapters by James L. Watson ("The Structure of Chinese Funerary Rites: Elementary Forms, Ritual Sequence, and the Primacy of Performance", pp. 3-19 and "Funeral Specialists in Cantonese Society: Pollution, Performance and Social Hierarchy", pp. 109-134), Susan Naquin ("Funerals in North China: Uniformity and Variation", pp. 37-70) and Rubie S. Watson, ("Remembering the Dead: Graves and Politics in Southeastern China", pp. 203-227).

<sup>63</sup> See F. Margiotti, *Il cattolicesimo nello Shansi*, pp. 437-442 for examples of communal conflict ignited by the refusal of Christians to contribute to "pagan" festivals and the upkeep of religious sites.

Jesuit Verbiest (1623-1688).<sup>64</sup> This would have paid tribute to Ferdinand Verbiest's ability to captivate the attention of curious non-believers, a skill the missionary had used on various occasions during his life-time to win over converts from among the literati.<sup>65</sup> It is likely that a strict interpretation would have entailed a great degree of intercommunal tension.<sup>66</sup> In some areas, heathens were admonished to follow the Christian funerary rites in public, while they were free to revert to their own customs privately at home. This concession included the right to celebrate the banquet in honour of deceased Christians according to established traditions, antedating the entry of Christianity into the village community. But even here, it is observed, the Christian families ensured that interment had already been fully completed. It seems self-evident that this practice arose out of the Christians' fear that the soul of the deceased family member could somehow be "infected" by pagan rites, if it was not given several days' opportunity to vacate its earthly vessel.<sup>67</sup> In a similar vein, reverential pictures of dead parents of could be found in many Christian homes. These may well have had a similar dual function as the ancestral tablets and funerary customs reformed by the Christian missionaries: Expressions of twofold loyalties, in a world where the old

---

The Jesuits, ever keen to integrate, preferred to adopt a neutral view on this issue. A brief discussion of and bibliographic introduction to the Rites Controversy can be found on pp. 33, 46 and *passim*.

<sup>64</sup> See the *Nouveaux Mémoires sur l'État présent de la Chine, par le P. Louis le Comte de la Compagnie de Jésus, Mathématicien du Roy*, Paris 1694, p. 109 ff. The description is critical of the gentiles' motives for attending Verbiest's funeral, but acknowledges their interest in the event as such - marked by a long défilé of Christian mourners, all dressed in white. Copies of the *Nouveaux Mémoires* are held at the Beitang collection (shelf mark 3329) and at the British Library. F. Margiotti, in *Il cattolicesimo nello Shansi*, pp. 537-538, explains the popularity of Verbiest in part as the result of his attempts to provide a dignified funeral even for the poorest of the poor.

<sup>65</sup> In so doing, Verbiest paved the way for the benevolent interest of the Kang-xi emperor. See John W. Witek, *Ferdinand Verbiest (1623-1688): Jesuit Missionary, Scientist, Engineer and Diplomat*, Nettetal: Steyler Verlag 1995, p. 309 ff.

<sup>66</sup> Referred to by Delgado, quoting a belligerent manifestation of Jesus in the gospels, as "bringing the sword and not harmony" (*Non veni pacem mittere, sed gladium*). Cf. APF SC, series III, *Cina and Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, folium 146.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibidem*, ff. 146 V and 147 R. Similar beliefs concerning the wellbeing of the deceased - through libations and banquet-like offerings - could also be encountered in Hellenic society. See Paul Veyne, *Le pain et le cirque: sociologie historique d'un pluralisme politique*, Paris: Seuil 1976.

traditions had not yet given way to Christian orthodoxy. In a letter from the early nineteenth century, Antonius of Calatia remarked on the continued existence of pagan funerary rites in his missionary area of Shanxi.<sup>68</sup> Most of the European missionaries seemed to condone their continued use, aware of the adverse effect a blanket ban may have on the prospect of attracting greater numbers of gentiles to their faith.<sup>69</sup> The absence of such images would invariably be interpreted as a lack of filial piety in the teachings of the Christians. Any attempt to link the remembrance of the deceased with propitious (*ji* 吉) or malevolent (*xiong* 凶) days of the peasant calendar, however, fell under the clear category of “superstition” - a stigma both the Christian missionaries and the Confucian literati agreed on.<sup>70</sup>

As funerary ritual was inextricably interwoven with the notion of decent *social* behaviour, any attempt to distil individual “spiritual aspects” would distort the overall importance of the event. It is indeed more appropriate to refer to the rites as a twofold celebration of family-bound ancestral continuity and of village-oriented social continuity.<sup>71</sup> A delicate problem faced the European missionaries when they had to arbitrate in cases affecting the foundations of Chinese family morals. Of late eighteenth century Shanxi we learn that unmarried sons and daughters were buried outside the burial grounds of the family. This was linked to the belief that they had not contributed to the continuation of the lineage, and that they were thus not worthy of

---

<sup>68</sup> Calatia, 26 October 1806. See APF SC, series III, *Cina and Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, f. 174.

<sup>69</sup> A hotly contested issue during the Rites Controversy. The “abolitionist” Francisco M. Garretto (OFM) advocated in 1731 that all tablets should be burnt, and that dying Christians be made to sign a written statement, attested by the heads of their Christian community, which obliged their sons not to erect any tablets for their departed souls. F. Margiotti, *Il cattolismo nello Shansi*, pp. 459-460 and 464-465.

<sup>70</sup> Delgado attempted to reason that it was “not the days which were bad, but whatever was done during these days” (*Neque enim dies mali sunt, sed ea quae fiunt in eis*). Cf. APF SC, series III, *Cina and Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, folium 147.

being offered a proper funeral service. Another problem arose out of the fact that Christians who were buried in the same sepulchres as their pagan ancestors were bound to be subjected to the same pagan commemorative rites. The segregation and desegregation, respectively, of Christian family members was hence a twilight area where European advice often failed to gain the approval of the local population.<sup>72</sup> Missionaries further aggravated their situation by insisting that converts were to hold their funerary celebrations separately from the non-Christian villagers. In their zeal for religious purity the missionaries thus risked conflict within the families and within the wider village communities.<sup>73</sup> Despite a fundamental lack of comprehension concerning the missionaries' concept of "sin", China's Christians accepted the notions of infernal punishment almost instantaneously. This can only be explained against the background of pre-existing images in folk religion, and should thus be regarded as a religious interface which facilitated the inculturation of Christianity to the religious life of late imperial China. Whereas most Christian commoners may have accepted such popular Buddhist concepts in order to flesh out their own vague understanding of what to expect after the moment of death, the funerary rites for a deceased family member belonged into a different category. Rites governing burial and commemoration cemented the ties of the village unit and also - as a consequence of the Song-Ming School's educational crusade - with the Confucian state. To insist on separate rites for the members of the Christian community could be interpreted as an act of social sabotage, regardless of the religious connotations. Following the official

---

<sup>71</sup> The *doppio funerale* is referred to by Lionello Lanciotti in his introduction to the religious beliefs of the Chinese. See "La religiosità dei cinesi", in Francisco d'Arelli and A. Tamburello, *La Missione Cattolica in Cina*, 1995, pp. 3-4.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. the report by Emmanuele Conforti of 1798, in B. Willeke, "The Report of the Apostolic Visitation", p. 262.

<sup>73</sup> ... a concern reflected in a letter of 1806 by Joseph Nunez Ribeira, "Bishop of Ipasa", to the Propaganda Fide; APF SOCP, *Indie Orientali*, 1806-1811, folium 19 V.

end of the Rites Controversy, the grave implications of complying with the Vatican's prohibition caused a split in China's Christian communities. The documents consulted for this thesis suggest that the decision, in the final analysis, depended on the will of the local Christians to either create a strong separate communal identity or to remain part of a functioning greater entity. The social dynamics of Christian communities were hence in no way different from that of other popular cults.

#### **4. *Materialism and superstition - attitudes towards religious discipline***

Non-metaphysical, materialistic thinking - one of the hallmarks of Chinese popular philosophy - was certainly influenced by official attempts to spread Confucian scepticism towards the transcendental. Anti-spiritual propaganda also exploited a tendency towards fatalism within popular Chinese culture.<sup>74</sup> Popular fatalism rested on the belief that life was governed by celestial influence, and that Heaven's will needed to be interpreted and predicted by means of 'human bridges' - sorcerers, soothsayers and astronomers. If Heaven did not show its benevolence, individuals, families and at times entire village communities would go to visit holy sites of Buddhist and animistic origin. Once the reason for the religious exercise had disappeared, however, the villagers would stay at home, without paying too much attention to previously approached deities.<sup>75</sup>

The all-pervading materialism engrained in Chinese culture can be directly attributed to China's agrarian roots: The desire for an even spread of rain and

---

<sup>74</sup> Documented, for instance, in this verse found in the Book of Poetry (*Shijing* 詩經): "The Mighty Heaven serves no purpose, Mighty Heaven has no wisdom" (昊天不弔, 昊天不謀). Cf. B. Karlgren, *The Book of Odes*, Stockholm: Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities 1950, chapter 194, "Yu wu zheng" 無政, pp. 140-142.

<sup>75</sup> See also his observations on religious life in rural China, in Fei Xiaotong, *Peasant Life in China: A Field Study of Country Life in the Yangtse Valley*, London: Routledge and Kegan 1939, pp. 99-105.



sunshine, for a balanced agricultural cycle, for abundant resources of cattle and grain encouraged prayers to those representatives of the spiritual world in charge of the elements. On a socio-psychological plane, the desire for children, for sons in particular, and for protection of the family's health and material well-being induced individuals to pray to those gods most likely to be effective in matters of heart and womb. The popular religions of the late imperial period proffered two candidates for this function: The Bodhisattva Guanyin as well as the immaculate virgin-mother of the Christian god.<sup>76</sup> To the average tiller, the differences between Mary and Guanyin, if at all perceived, would probably have appeared insignificant.<sup>77</sup> Worship of these two popular saints followed the same pattern applied to the other members of the popular pantheon: Not primarily through devotion to the spiritual quality of the particular deity, but with the intention of obtaining concrete support for the praying individual.<sup>78</sup> Therefore it does not seem surprising that many of the first missionary churches were known as "Hall for the [veneration of the] Holy Mother" (*Shengmutang* 聖母堂).<sup>79</sup> It is important to remember that the religious identity of the sacrificial location was always considered less important than the fact that supernatural beings had been asked for help. If quality did not matter then quantity certainly did: The more

---

<sup>76</sup> For a devotional depiction of Mary in the guise of the Bodhisattva Guanyin ("*la Madonna cinese*"), see Pasquale M. D'Elia, *Le origini dell'arte cristiana cinese (1583-1640)*, Rome: Accademia Reale d'Italia 1939, p. 51. References to "Buddha statues" (*foxiang* 佛像) in official documents suggest that Buddhist influence on Christian iconography was not uncommon. See, for instance, the memorial referred to on p. 163 (scroll 9258, original document 492, sub-number 17, frames 324-330).

<sup>77</sup> This is at least Stephen Turnbull's conclusion concerning the popularity of the *Maria-Kannon* (i.e. *Guanyin*) double-deity. See S. Turnbull, *Devotion to Mary*, p. 10 and *idem*, *The Kakure Kirishitan of Japan*, pp. 104-110 (on the worship of saint figures, *gozensama*). In this context the popularity of another female deity deserves to be mentioned, i.e. that of the Eternal Venerable Mother *Wusheng Laomu* 無生老母. With the publication of the Dragon Flower Sutra (*Longhuaajing* 龍華經), the image of a kind-hearted, compassionate grandmother figure began permeate popular culture. See R. H. C. Shek, "Religion and Society", p. 302 ff. For emotional descriptions by pilgrims to sites dedicated to Guanyin on Putuo Shan, see Chün-fang Yü, "P'u-t'o Shan", pp. 218-219.

<sup>78</sup> The early nineteenth-century Protestant convert Liang Fa 梁發, formerly himself a Guanyin devotee, vigorously attacked the popular worship of female deities such as the Bodhisattva Guanyin and the Gold Flower Lady (*Jinhua furen*, 金花夫人). See Kwok Pui-lan, *Chinese Women and Christianity*, p. 10, as well as pp. 52-57 (on the popularity of female gods in popular religiosity).

gods could be asked for protection, the higher the likelihood of a positive response.<sup>80</sup> Already Matteo Ricci, converter of the elite, had observed the concretely utilitarian, at times hedonistic and unrespecting character of Chinese spirit worship. For the missionaries of the nineteenth century the very same phenomenon was reflected in the form of “Rice Christianity” - converts flocking into the parish halls whenever the material situation was opportune, and quite happily leaving for Buddhist and other temples if the chance of divine intervention there seemed given.<sup>81</sup>

Apostasy - the Biblical “Sin against the Holy Spirit” and the unpardonable betrayal against a beleaguered Christendom - was very often the only logical escape route for Christians who found themselves in conflict with the authorities. In a variety of documents, we are confronted with the paradox of Chinese Christians displaying genuinely Chinese patterns of religio-social behaviour at the very moment of perceived apostasy. Or rather, what was perceived in the European tradition as the touchstone issue of religious loyalty during martyrdom and tribulations by the earthly rulers was treated by Chinese Christians with the same levity as polytheistic worship.<sup>82</sup> Already the first Western missionaries observed that converts returned in

---

<sup>79</sup> See F. Margiotti, *Il cattolicesimo nello Shansi*, p. 299.

<sup>80</sup> Despite its size and regional diversities, some deities are worshipped throughout China (and eastern Asia), such as the god Lüzu 呂祖, who was obliged to respond to prayers. His equivalent in China's ports is the - female - Mazu 媽祖, the popular expression of the Celestial Empress *Tianhou* 天后. Such gods shared their popularity with other protective figures, most prominently the Venerable Mother *Laomu* 老母, the Bodhisattva Guanyin *Guanyin pusa* 觀音菩薩, the Dragon King *Longwang* 龍王 and the three Guardian Warrior Spirits displayed on doorposts, the *Sanguanshen* 三官神. See S. Feuchtwang, “School-Temple and City God”, pp. 583-584.

<sup>81</sup> The term was used in a letter by Pottier in the statement “ils apprennent la manière de manger le riz et les cérémonies...” See Léonide Guiot, *La Mission du Su-tchuen au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, p. 141.

<sup>82</sup> An obvious exception to this rule is the well-known case of the Fu'an Christians, who accompanied their arrested European priests and tearfully swore never to abandon their faith, at whatever price: “Our generation will suffer for the Lord, and not repent even when faced with death” (福州府城內各教堂教民等跪呈). The Fu'an case is described in a memorial by Gioro Yarhashan 郭爾雅哈善, of QL 11/8/2 (16 September 1746), and preserved in the Palace Memorials Annotated by the Emperor (*Gongzhong zhupi zouzhe* 宮中奏摺), volume 292, no 1. See Ma Zhao, *Shilun Qianlong shiqi (1736-1796) chajin tianzhujiao shijian*, p. 35.

droves to their old gods in times of persecution, even if their images had been destroyed by converts in their first zeal.<sup>83</sup> In many ways, Christians regarded apostasy as a temporary withdrawal aimed at securing the physical existence of the individual believer and of his or her family. The absence of a tradition of glorified martyrdom indubitably encouraged this mode of thinking. As a “tactical retreat” employed during interrogations by state officials, it could not merely save the bodily life of the captive Christian, but could also preserve Christianity as a communally practised religion within family, village and peer group beyond the immediate moment of persecution.<sup>84</sup> The astounding ease which accompanied apparent apostasies is documented in a memorial presented to the Jiaqing throne in 1805.<sup>85</sup> The culprits, the Blue Banner officers Tong Lan, Shuminseke and Li Qingxi, as well as dozens of their family members, had been demoted and singled out for punishment by the paramount military official Eledengbao.<sup>86</sup> The memorial begins with a summary account by the “faith offenders”, stating the reasons as to why they thought of themselves as Christians. The confession simply states that both individuals had followed the religion of their ancestors, the oldest of whom had become a Christian “three generations ago”, i.e. prior to the edict of 1724. As a clearly mitigating circumstance,

---

It is perhaps also noteworthy that Japan’s Hidden Christians made the worship of the Tokugawa martyrs a central piece of their religious veneration, believing the martyred Christians to have been transformed into *kami* 神. See S. Turnbull, *The Kakure Kirishitan of Japan*, pp. 111-115 and 133-137. During the course of the Japanese persecutions, captive Korean Christians soon became renowned for their steadfastness. For examples, see J. Ruiz-de-Medina / Bridges, 1991, pp. 299-315 (martyrdom of Kaun Vicente), pp. 324-325 (Korean Christian “Isabel”) *et passim*.

<sup>83</sup> See F. Margiotti, *Il cattolismo nello Shansi*, p. 150.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 478, note 114, refers to an APF document (letter of 27 September 1736 by Gabriele [of Turin, OFM] to Arcangelo Miralta [CRM]), stating that an entire Christian community who had apostatised under pressure only days before, congregated in a remote area, where they had invited Pater Gabriele to administer the sacraments in the security of the local caves.

<sup>85</sup> See the memorial by the Hanlin academician Dong Gao to the Jiaqing emperor, on JQ 10/5/19, i.e. 16 June 1805. FHA, scroll 9260, original document 498, sub-number 46, frames 755-780.

<sup>86</sup> See *ibidem*, frames 746-754. For an analysis of other memorials by Eledengbao, 额勒登保, Guang Xing 广兴, Pusabao 普萨保 and Fusejianeche 傅塞坚额, see also pp. 260 ff. and 303 ff. For an abridged account of Eledengbao’s (Eldemboo) eventful life see A. Hummel, *Eminent*

Dong Gao quotes the statement that “there had been no other teachers” than their ancestors (*wulingyou shifu* 烏陵有師). Taking one’s fathers and grandfathers seriously was hence in this context if not laudable, then at least a “natural” display of filial piety. Their knowledge of the chief doctrinal elements was clearly limited to “knowing that the Celestial Lord urged people to behave well” (*tianzhu quan ren xinghao* 天主勸人向善). No information about Christianity’s illegal classification had reached the accused - a statement emphasised by the confession that they had been “unable to awaken from their mental torpor” (*weineng xingwu, buken chujiao* 未能醒悟, 不肯出教), until alerted by the watchful state officials. Appealing to the nascent fear of foreign intrusion among Qing officials, they also pandered to their feeling of rational superiority. They had “succumbed to the perturbing words of foreigners”, and hence converted to Christianity “with innocent minds” (*tingshou xiyangrende yaohuo, ganxin rujiao* 聽受西洋人惑, 甘心入教). They hence considered themselves guilty of having “committed a grave transgression” (*ziqu zhongzui* 自取重罪) and of having caused the Banner troops as a whole “to lose face” (*gei qiren diulian* 給旗人丟臉). Begging for imperial mercy, the culprits promised to abjure from the “wicked belief” in all its manifestations. The procedure of apostasy followed the pattern of earlier persecutions: Verbal promises of abiding by the rules of “Chinese tradition”, i.e. of attaching door scrolls (*duilian* 對聯) with non-Christian messages and of reinstating the suspended ceremonies of ancestral veneration,<sup>87</sup> followed by the

---

*Chinese of the Ch'ing period - 1644-1911*, Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office 1943, pp. 222-224.

<sup>87</sup> F. Margiotti, *Il cattolicesimo nello Shansi*, p. 478 notes the simplicity of apostasy: A verbal renunciation of Christianity - “Let us renounce the Teaching of the Lord of Heaven” (*fan tianzhujiao* 反天主敎), followed by prostrations (kowtow) in front of an image of the Buddha, often sufficed to satisfy the prosecuting officials. On the importance of door scrolls and other religious symbolisms, see p. 92 ff of this thesis.



<sup>90</sup> *ibidem*

“Commemorative tablet of the ancestors, in order of sequence, to be displayed high on top of a door or in a hall: In his tablet rest no spirits, it has been made to let sons and grandsons pay respect, and though they cannot partake in the offers of food and libations, they will always be held in filial respect and never be forgotten.” Note that the emphasis of the inscription is firmly placed on the descendant’s obligation to respect the memory of the ancestors, not the spiritual well-being of the latter (i.e. no *Requiescat in Pace* for the deceased).

community.<sup>92</sup> What was condemned as a sin beyond redemption by the western missionaries was hence deemed a rather natural act of self-preservation by their Chinese contemporaries.<sup>93</sup> The fact that the majority of Chinese converts perceived the threat exerted by office clerks and yamen torturers as more terrifying than the prospect of forsaking paradise and a Christian graveyard, reveals the obstacles faced by missionaries originating from a different religious universe.<sup>94</sup>

The few European missionaries who remained in the empire observed the “whipped up ocean of China” with despair. Following the persecutions of the eighteenth century, the congregations had effectively escaped the supervision of the European missionaries. In the words of a missionary active in the Huguang region: “Like drifting shoals of fish, they are unable to find the right way”.<sup>95</sup> The statement indicates a significant shift of Christianity away from a religion of external proselytisation and management to a localised network of Christian ‘cells’ (family units and larger), increasingly active in marginal regions. Within these largely autochthonous Christian communities, cultural traditions predating the teachings of the European missionaries remained strong, forming an alloy of transcendental theology and earth-bound Chinese peasant beliefs. Visiting European missionaries were appalled by the perceived lack of spirituality and theological awareness. What the

---

<sup>92</sup> In the bishop’s own words: *Inter Christianos lapsos sunt aliqui, qui non erexerunt tabellam superstitiosam sed satellites, aut parentes gentiles, aut judex ruralis, vel omnes isti simul eam per vim erexerunt.* (“Among the fallen Christians are some who did not [willingly] erect superstitious tablets, but who [rather] in a subservient way, were forced by their non-Christian parents, by the local judge or similar factors to erect them.”) Cf. APF SOCP, *Indie Orientali*, 1806-1811, folium 19V.

<sup>93</sup> On the phenomenon of “Consuming religion, not believing in it” (*chijiao bu xinjiao* 吃教不信心) see Hou Jie and Fan Lizhu, *Zhongguo minzhong zongjiao yishi*, pp. 89-104 and 115-126.

<sup>94</sup> Similar conclusions, albeit from the viewpoint of late twentieth century urban China, are drawn in Sun Li “Christianity from the Viewpoint of Young Christians: the Example of Shanghai”, in Philip Wickeri and Lois Cole, *Christianity and Chinese Modernization*, pp. 79-89.

<sup>95</sup> *Pesce vaggianti, non possono trovar il retto sentiere.* The missionary is Giovanni Antonio di Pompejana. The letter (29 October 1806, Henceu / Hunan province) is kept at the APF as document SC, series III, *Cina and Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, f. 176V.

local Christians believed in, according to a letter of 1806 by the missionary apostolic Giovanni Antonio da Pompejana, was a “minimal faith” which stipulated that by means of baptism alone salvation could be attained. No other acts of contrition or meditative reflection were habitually practised by this first category of Christians. A second category, the source continues, comprised those Christians who were fervent in their faith, without actually having understood - or being willing to understand - its basic principles, including the articles of faith and the ten commandments. This latter type of Christians largely concentrated on reciting common prayers and on meditating - in the same vein as “idol worshippers”.<sup>96</sup> In fact, while celebrating their birthdays and funerals they paid great attention to certain “pagan” cults, either out of tradition, or for fear of reprisals from the gentile neighbours. The adherence of both categories of converts to pre-Christian customs also extended into other areas, mainly affecting nuptial customs and the practice of usury. Sundays and holidays were not observed as a matter of course. All in all, the apostolic observer concluded, the Chinese Christians were pursuing an “empty religion”, their lives focused on the conservation of their bodies, without any thought for the well-being of their souls.<sup>97</sup>

If materialist irreverence towards the gods can be described as a hallmark of popular religious life in the late imperial period, the village population saw no

---

<sup>96</sup> Susan Naquin would presumably classify Christian prayer groups as belonging to the “sutra recitation” category. See her “Transmission of White Lotus Sectarianism”, pp. 260-274.

<sup>97</sup> Free rendering of ... *una fede materiale, cioè credendo col solo battismo dio sia placato e sia per premiarli colla gloria dell paradiso .... La seconda classe e di fevvorosi e buoni, ... che non hanno ... compreso la dottrina o non hanno voluto comprendere detti dieci commandamenti, contendosi solo di recitare le consuete preci ed osservare ... nelle loro sale comuni versì superstitiosi, ..., dal gentilissimo nulla affatto distinti, pertanto in ragione ... e solo conservarli per essergli stati da gentili mandati in occasione del loro sêng jé (□□□□ comple annos), o nella morte de loro defonti ... e per timore d'offendere di gentili. ... in una parola, una gente che conserva una religione fittile, che non vale quattro quattroni, e che per altro non pensa che alla conservazione del proprio corpo, nulla rammentandosi dell'anima.* Letter by Giovanni Antonio “di Pompejana”\* (29 October 1806), kept at the APF as document SC, series III, *Cina and Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, f. 177 R/V. \*[surname not recorded, merely his place of birth, the Italian Pompeiana. The cleric adopted the Chinese surname of Wu □□ and died in 1828.]



grounds to conceal its belief in spiritual phenomena.<sup>98</sup> In a society fundamentally dependent on the generative forces of nature, it was of existential importance to have experts capable of interpreting nature (“Heaven”, *tian* 天), and the multitude of spiritual beings that represented it. The direct worship of Heaven was limited to the emperor alone.<sup>99</sup> The common people had to be content with imploring the concrete manifestations of nature - the gods, the spirits and ghosts hiding in brooks, trees, the soil. These experts were experienced communicators with the creatures of the spiritual world, but also with the abstract force of Heaven, as well as with the human hearts exposed to its will. The ancient belief in the spiritual medium availed itself to interpretations of the “high religions” dominating China’s intellectual elite. Thus it became entwined with Buddhist notions of reincarnation, but also with the sacramental powers of the Christian priest, bridge builder between the ‘little lives’ of the peasantry and the almighty Christian god.

“Spirits” (*shen* 神) were popularly venerated, as they comprised the departed souls (*ling* 灵) of beloved relatives and the kinder transcendental forces.<sup>100</sup> The attitude of the common worshipper can be most accurately described as utilitarian: Any godhead can be approached for help, but without a feeling of obligation; there is no need to submit oneself to any kind of spiritual discipline. Mirroring social conventions, sacrificial objects were proffered on the basis of inducing a sense of reciprocity - just as treating a mortal to dinner would result in the guest’s moral

---

<sup>98</sup> News items from the popular press of the republican period further underline the continuity of popular beliefs. See, for instance, the *Shenbao* 申報 22/7/1925 for a report on widespread floodings around Shanghai, which induced the local population to sacrifice to every godhead known of in the terrain). Though banished by the Communist government from the contemporary press, similar reports abound from mainland China.

<sup>99</sup> At a yearly ceremony celebrated by the emperor at the Temple of Heaven (*Tiantan* 天壇), in Beijing. For more details see Qing Xitai and Tang Dachao, *Daojiaoshi*, pp. 322-324.

obligation to respond in kind in the future.<sup>101</sup> Prayer (*dao* 道) is firmly fixed on the problems of the earthly world, usually taken to the spirits in times of concrete need. In order to maximise the chances of obtaining these earthly needs, prayers are directed at as many spiritual beings as possible: Buddhist and Daoist saints, Confucian sages, military heroes, venerated ancestors, manifestations of the natural elements, celestial bodies - the more in number, the more effective the result.<sup>102</sup> State officials mirrored popular utilitarianism by publicly rewarding “effective” gods (through titles and inscriptions) and by punishing “lazy” ones (through remonstrations and thrashing).<sup>103</sup>

For converts to Christianity, the imposition of monotheistic values must have created a great dilemma. How would the spirits react to no longer being worshipped? Why was the new god so jealous? And how should Christians react if non-believers “borrowed” the Christian god and saints in order to enrich their own ritual traditions? At least one letter preserved in the archives of the Propaganda Fide, blaming the influence of the “diabolical” Buddhist bonzes, suggests that the Virgin Mary had joined the panoply of protective spirits and immortals.<sup>104</sup> Other sources from the early

---

<sup>100</sup> Spirits (*shen* 神), angels (*tianshi* 天士 or *shichen* 神臣) and the concept of the Holy Spirit (*shenfeng* 聖風) presented the missionary translator with serious dilemmas. These vexations are illustrated in F. Margiotti, *Il cattolicesimo nello Shansi*, pp. 341 ff.

<sup>101</sup> I owe this comparison to Professor Ma Xisha. Readers familiar with Chinese social practice will have experienced the subtle undertones of obligation (“blackmail”) entailed by agreeing to an invitation to dinner, at least with more distant acquaintances. David Jordan refers to this practice as “manipulating the gods”. See Jordan, *Gods, Ghosts, and Ancestors*, pp. xvii, 85 ff. and 175-176. Parallels with Greek (*theoxenia*) and Roman (the *cenae deum*) customs become evident in Paul Veyne, “La religion gréco-romain: Le sacré et le profane”, in: *Annales (Histoire, Sciences Sociales)*, LV-1 (January/February 2000), pp. 20 and 41, respectively.

<sup>102</sup> As reflected in the popular saying “It is better to ask many gods than to pray only to one” (*qiu yishen buru qiu duoshen* 求一神不如求多神). The emphasis on utilitarianism is often used for illustrating the differences between Western monotheism and popular Chinese religion, a view criticised in Julia Ching, *Chinese Religions*, London: Macmillan 1993, p. 210. The view is also discussed in C. K. Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society*, pp. 3 and 6 ff. A critical view of popular European religious practice, however, ought to instil a sense of caution: are Catholic prayers not directed to “all the saints and the Virgin Mary”, for divine intercession?

<sup>103</sup> See C. K. Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society*, pp. 181-182 and pp. 183-186, for the late nineteenth century.

<sup>104</sup> See the letter by Antonius di Calatia (26-8-1806), APF SC, series III, *Cina e Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, folium 174R. See also the comments by F. Margiotti, in *Il cattolicesimo nello Shansi*, on p. 539 ff.

Qianlong period suggest that Mary was being identified with the Unborn Mother of the West.<sup>105</sup> The Mother of God had thus become part of the rural world of spiritual beings. While spirits were approached as benevolent creatures, “ghosts” (*gui* 鬼) were dreaded as they reminded the mortals of death - the end of the material life so cherished in popular culture.<sup>106</sup> Fear of ghosts centred on the souls of persons who departed unnaturally - in captivity, through starvation or execution.<sup>107</sup> Fear engendered the need for self-protection, through sophisticated techniques and rituals: The music, fire-crackers and theatrical celebrations of the *Nuo* 傩 and Spring festivals, exclusive congregations of spiritual media (*guihui* 鬼会), as well as the specially prepared talismans, stamping and writing equipment, red paper umbrellas, protective charms and doorpost characters, the chants borrowed from Buddhism for warding off evil influence, endowing children with evil names before their first full month after birth - all carried out by Daoist hermits and geomancers and all passed down from the older

---

concerning the popularity of Mary’s name on doorpost scrolls and in popular culture in general. A clear parallel is the experience of Japan’s *kakure kirishitan*, whose Christian symbolism had begun to merge with elements of local folklore to form a hybrid expression of popular religious culture. For an analysis of the *Tenchi Hajimari* (“Creation of Heaven and Earth” 天地开辟), which contains the essence of the religious beliefs of the Hidden Christians, see S. Turnbull, *Devotion to Mary*, 1993, pp. 11-16. See also the contribution “Acculturation among the *Kakure Kirishitan*: Some Conclusions from the *Tenchi Hajimari no Koto*” by the same author, in Breen and Williams (eds), *Japan and Christianity*, 1996, pp. 63-74.

<sup>105</sup> See Robert E. Entenmann, “Catholics and Society in Eighteenth Century Sichuan”, pp. 12-15.

<sup>106</sup> For a full encyclopaedic introduction to the different categories of Chinese ghostdom, see Xu Hualong 许华龙, *Zhongguo guiwenhua dacidian* 中国鬼文化大辞典 (“A complete dictionary of China’s ghost culture”), *Guangxi minzu chubanshe* 广西民族出版社 (Guangxi People’s Press) 1994. Popular literature, from ancient tales of fox spirits and hungry ghosts to the ghost films of Hong Kong cinema, provides a vivid depiction of commonly held - and often contradictory - beliefs.

<sup>107</sup> Myron Cohen points out the pernicious nature of the “grave soul”, but does not fail to mention that “most spirits who are ghosts to one person are ancestors to someone else”. See M. L. Cohen, “Souls and Salvation”, p. 189 (quoting from Arthur P. Wolf, “Gods, Ghosts and Ancestors”, in: Arthur P. Wolf, *Religion and Ritual in Chinese Society*, Stanford: Stanford University Press 1973, p. 172). On the ancient custom of “calling the soul” (*zhaohun* 招魂) of departed family members, see Stevan Harrell, “The Concept of Soul in Chinese Folk Religion”, p. 525, as well as Yü Ying-shi, “‘O Soul, Come Back!’ A Study in the Changing Conceptions of the Soul and the Afterlife in Pre-Buddhist China”, in: *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, XLVII- 2 (1987), pp. 381-386 (on differences between pre- and post-Buddhist concepts of afterlife).

generation to children and grandchildren.<sup>108</sup> Within the all-pervasive cosmos of lucky charms and protective sorcery, Christian crucifixes, rosaries and saintly statuettes became an integral part of popular religious culture.<sup>109</sup> Fear of ghosts and the worshipping of spirits by China's Christian communities further underlines the theological ambiguity of Christianity during the long century of prohibition.

---

<sup>108</sup> See Hou Jie and Fan Lizhu, *Zhongguo minzhong zongjiao yishi*, pp. 210-220.

<sup>109</sup> An example from the earliest period of the Catholic missions in China is the *Agnus Dei* medallion, reportedly having the power to calm storms and to extinguish fires. See Dudink, "The *Sheng-ch'ao tso-p'i*", pp. 113 and 117-119 (in particular note 73).

## 5. *Matrimony and filial duty*

China's social traditions depended, during the mid-Qing period, to a large extent on the patterns of livelihood in the agrarian heartland. Where the rural economy underwent change, these traditions would in turn also be affected.<sup>110</sup> Since the papal decree declaring the non-compatibility of certain ancestral rites with Christian doctrine, China's Christians faced a delicate balance between observing "old" traditions regarded as vital to the functioning of the village communities, and the necessity to preserve the "new" cultic stipulations of their own, Christian, community. The beginning of the eighteenth century ushered in a period of political stability and economic reconstruction for most provinces of the Qing empire. While its Manchurian leadership was coming to an arrangement with the literati in the capital and the local elites, the Qing state developed restructuring programmes for those provinces most afflicted by the warfare of the Ming-Qing transition, the forays of pro-Ming freebooters along the south-eastern coast and the Three Feudatories uprising.<sup>111</sup> For the farming community, the simplest response to the demographic depletions caused by decades of warfare was to promote the natural growth of their families - at least until the population pressure of the century's latter half caused a large proportion of

---

<sup>110</sup> This commonplace observation, naturally, also holds true for agrarian societies in general. For more insight into the functioning of China's rural society see, for instance, Fei Xiaotong, *Peasant Life in China*, in particular the introduction to the nature of the family unit (*jia* 家), pp. 27-55. Jan Myrdal, *Return to a Chinese Village*, New York: Pantheon Press 1984 and Hugh D. R. Baker, *Chinese Family and Kinship*, London: Macmillan 1979 offer insight into the - political and economic - transformations of the twentieth century in the Chinese countryside.

<sup>111</sup> The main exponent of the mid-Qing reconstruction programme was the Yongzheng emperor, who made prosperity and social peace the main agenda of his government. Cf. Feng Erkang, *Yongzheng zhuan*, pp. 75-85. See also the extensive study of Huang Pei: *Autocracy at Work - A Study of the Yung-cheng Period, 1723-1735*, Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press 1974, especially pp. 226-272. In the last months of the twentieth century, the young emperor was presented by the Communist authorities as a reformer of historic proportions - akin in his achievements to the late Deng Xiaoping.

young men to seek prosperity in other parts of the empire.<sup>112</sup> Coupled with the urge for stability and material abundance, the social values propounded by the educated elite reinforced the creation of large family structures, as a backbone for society at large. The imperative of paternal authority and filial responsibility had been taken to the village squares since the philosophical reform movement had formulated its aims during the Song and Ming dynasties.<sup>113</sup> But during the eighteenth century, the popularity of such “Confucian” values gathered pace through the creation of lineage structures, not only within the literati class.<sup>114</sup> These structures depended, for the sake of self-perpetuation, on cults and rites, which tied the different generations into one entity. We have already examined the importance of funerary rites in this context and will now look at the beginning of the reproductive cycle - matrimony and birth - in order to analyse intercommunal coexistence as well as potential areas of conflict for the Christians of eighteenth century rural China.

The “nuclear question” of cohabitation between Christian converts and the non-Christian community is defined, by force of human nature, by the degree of tolerance towards admitting members of the other community to marry into the group. During the course of Christianity’s development, dogmatic considerations have usually been subordinate to pre-existing social conventions. The Christian experience in China presented no exception to this rule. Though future research has yet to produce directly documented criteria for the marriage customs in rural Christian communities, we can extrapolate a number of conclusions out of source materials

---

<sup>112</sup> See Ho Ping-ti, *Studies on the Population of China, 1368-1953*, Cambridge / Massachusetts: Harvard University Press 1974, pp. 36-64 (for the mid-Qing period in general) and pp. 139-143 (for developments in Sichuan in particular).

<sup>113</sup> On the manifold expressions of the “Neo-Confucian” movement, see Wing-Tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, Princeton: Princeton University Press and Oxford University Press 1969, and also Lionel M. Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism*, pp. 31-77.

relating to the issue. The most directly accessible evidence of conflicting interests is documented in missionary correspondence revealing confusion with respect to intermarriage. When European priests visited some of the communities theoretically within the boundaries of their missionary areas, they encountered matrimonial problems which had been left “scandalously” unresolved pursuant to the stipulations of Catholic doctrine. A letter by Joseph Milt from the year 1806, for instance, mentions the case of a divorce between a Christian woman and her non-Christian husband. The couple had separated from their previous spouses a few years before the arrival of the travelling missionary, and had remarried in accordance with local custom. A simple solution for a dogmatically intricate problem.<sup>115</sup> The same also applies to marital problems within the Christian community, which are equally revealing as far as contemporary social norms are concerned. One request for guidance in this matter was directed to the Vicar Apostolic Dufresse, who referred to it in a report on the situation in Sichuan in the first decade of the nineteenth century.<sup>116</sup> According to Dufresse, a male Christian had disturbed social harmony by pursuing a relationship with a much younger cousin. To prevent a potential loss of face, the Christian decided to “keep the secret in the family” by marrying the disgraced cousin off to his son - without giving any prior notice to the missionary. After the mismatch had become public knowledge, the Christians involved begged Dufresse to seek papal authorisation in order to dissolve the marriage in a Christian way, and without amplifying the repercussions of the scandal. While it is not clear whether all parties involved could be referred to as Christians, the fact that papal approval was sought

---

<sup>114</sup> See B. A. Elman, *Classicism, Politics, and Kinship*, p. 87 ff, on the importance of such lineages for the perpetuation of religious beliefs.

<sup>115</sup> Sent by Joseph Milt on 27 December 1806, from Fujian province. Cf. APF document SC, series III, *Cina et Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, folium 215 R.

<sup>116</sup> Dated 9-10-1806. Cf. APF, SC, series III, *Cina e Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, ff. 207-208.

does suggest this possibility. The episode also reveals the powerful position of the patriarchal tradition in mid-Qing China: A father, who had become entangled in the web spun by his own inadequacies, being able to force his female victim and his own son into a marriage against their will. The fact that the missionary was approached to save the situation must be regarded as an act of desperation, indicating that traditional channels of social communication had failed.<sup>117</sup>

Such examples of marriage breakdowns also illustrate the collapse of the social infrastructure marriage in traditional China entailed. But what about the majority of those marriages which functioned without major disruptions? Missionary correspondence frequently refers to examples of inter-communal marriages with a certain degree of criticism - without condemning these marriages in principle.<sup>118</sup> The missionaries' main criticism was usually directed at the difficulty of maintaining the "purity of the Christian faith", rather than at the problem of making the marriage viable in social and personal terms. The missionaries knew, however, that during the early history of Christianity, intermarriage had provided an important means of conversion, and the (celibate) European priests were hence eager to preserve this one element concerning marriage they were able to relate to. A letter from early nineteenth century Shanxi highlights the common nature of mixed marriages. The rather critical remarks by Giovanni A. di Pompejana concentrate on the strong links which existed between both communities, usually to the detriment of Christian doctrinal purity. One such observation was reserved for incest - a widespread custom in the mountain areas

---

<sup>117</sup> Freely paraphrased from the original (*ibidem*, folium 208V): *Praeter casum in meis litteris 14.8.bris anni superioris [i.e. 14 October 1805] Sac. Cong.ni propositum alius similis anno praesenti occurrit: quidam scilicet X.tianus habito prius commercio carnale cum nuru sua ..., multis rem ita scientibus, ut occulta nimine censerit possit, matrimonium deinde cum filio, inconsulto Missionario, celebrari curavit, nec ambo sponsi nec absque tumultu et scandalo separari possunt; unde similiter pro convalidando hujus modi matrimonio invalido, humiliter petitur a S. Sede dispensatio.*



of Shanxi, where villages were separated from each other through difficult terrain and hazardous roads. Wedlock within the first degree of consanguinity was also a taboo in the Chinese tradition, but here local custom outweighed the greater conventions. As far as the missionaries were concerned, the letter concludes, the most important rule to observe under these circumstances was to keep a tactful silence.<sup>119</sup>

We also learn of marriage patterns as “footnotes” in the reports compiled by magistrates or representatives of the central administration. Reference to the marital status of discovered sectarians belonged to the standard questions of each interrogation, the number of children being duly noted. Not having any offspring was recorded with particular interest, since it raised a number of questions concerning the identity of the suspect: Had he run away from his home village and a previous marriage, possibly in connection with other crimes? Were man and wife so desperate for children that they approached sorcerers and leaders of forbidden cults for blessing and guidance? Not having a family to care for rendered the suspect more likely to migrate freely through the land, increasing the possibility of unlawful acts. Being without issue meant that he could roll up his mat within a matter of hours, in order to escape the consequences of his actions.<sup>120</sup> Other legal documents reveal the “negative influence” of a wife or husband on the moral beliefs of a spouse. The responsibility for adherence to Christianity, as a prohibited sect, was thus allotted to the spouse as an intruding outsider, luring the innocent mate into rebellious superstition. One young

---

<sup>118</sup> Compare the comments by Giuseppe Cerù, from the early eighteenth century. His deliberations on missionary techniques are filed as APF document SOCP, *Indie Orientali*, 1723-1725, ff. 21-23.

<sup>119</sup> ... *matrimonio nel primo grado de consanguinità collaterale ineguale inconsulto il Padre, por tanto poi per senza il nesciebam, obbligando così i PP.Missionari a dispensarli*. Cf. APF SC, series III, *Cina e Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, folium 177 R.

<sup>120</sup> This phenomenon increased during the latter half of the eighteenth century, when demographic pressure began to upset the established balance. The sojourn of migrant worker He Guoda, cited in various contexts throughout this thesis, at the home of his Christian landowner may serve as an

Christian man, interrogated in 1817 by the Imperial Clan Court (*zongrenfu* 宗人府) official Mian Kai 綿凱, put the “blame” for his illegal status squarely onto the shoulders of his wife, whom he blamed for introducing him to the forbidden doctrines of the Christian cult.<sup>121</sup>

An issue as potentially divisive as intermarriage, though conceptually diametrically opposed, were the Christian “virgins’ sororities”.<sup>122</sup> Though most reports about Christian women voluntarily living in seclusion - referred to in the European correspondence as *vocatas virgines* - originate from the province of Sichuan, letters sent to priests stationed in Macau also reach us from other parts of the Chinese hinterland. These women, often in their early twenties, found voluntary seclusion preferable to living in a society dominated by (heathen) men.<sup>123</sup> The local population mostly regarded these single women as saboteurs of social order, due to their refusal to marry and generate successors to the male ancestral line, and hence frequently abused the Christian “virgins”. Some sources, however, suggest that the “virgins” were a source of admiration to some families, such as widows who were still bringing up their children, and that they even constituted an important factor for the conversion of entire families.<sup>124</sup> We also learn that gentiles with girls in the same age group

---

example. See FHA, scroll 9258, original document 492, sub-numbers 19-20, frames 339-344, dated QL 39/4/12 (i.e. 21/5/1774).

<sup>121</sup> Cf. FHA, scroll 9261, document 501, sub-number 20, frames 872-878, dated 23/12/1817. Mian Kai (1795-1839) is referred to by his posthumous name of Mian Ke 綿可 in de Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution*, p. 463.

<sup>122</sup> For Sichuan, these are well documented in R. Entenmann, “Christian Virgins”, pp. 180-194.

<sup>123</sup> All-women associations were by no means unusual and were also a common feature of Buddhist pilgrimage associations. With reference to the *Xingshi yinyuan zhuan* 醒世姻緣傳, see Glen Dudbridge, “Women Pilgrims to T’ai Shan: Some Pages from a Seventeenth-Century Novel”, in: Susan Naquin and Chü-fang Yü (eds), *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites*, p. 55 ff. See also Erik Zürcher, *Bouddhisme, christianisme et société chinoise*, pp. 43-49 (“Religieuses et convents dans l’ancien Bouddhisme chinois”).

<sup>124</sup> Parents - and at times even male suitors and later husbands - were usually able to enter the sororities. See Léonide Guiot, *La Mission du Su-tchuen au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, p. 335.

considered the “Christian virgins” as worthy of admiration.<sup>125</sup> Convents run by the direct guidance of Western missionaries were, however, often difficult to justify. In order to save themselves from the wrath of the local population, convents often imposed a minimum age on prospective nuns, in general around the age of forty.<sup>126</sup> During the eighteenth century, such convents gave way to loosely hierarchised sororities, often situated in locations which were difficult to access and generally kept secret. But the phenomenon of marriage refusal by women can also be traced to other religious traditions. Buddhist convents (*ni'an* 尼庵) attracted young women in great numbers, though many were forced to enter monastic life out of economic necessity, rather than religious or intellectual persuasion.<sup>127</sup> During the Qing period, the state even promoted female chastity to a certain extent, by encouraging widows to renounce the option of remarriage. These “women of virtue” (*jienü* 節婦) were held in high esteem by society at large, as well as by the Confucian-educated state officials, who would erect arches and stelae for public exultation.<sup>128</sup> Christian sisterhoods and marriage refusal thus drew from a powerful subculture, which greatly facilitated the process of inculturation. To the non-Christian neighbours of these virgins, the

---

<sup>125</sup> Léonide Guiot makes reference to the correspondence between Pottier and the Vatican concerning the sororities. Realising that many girls joined at a very young age, the Propaganda issued guidelines which *inter alia* stipulated a preferred minimum age of thirty and an absolute minimum of twenty-five years before any virginity vows could be undertaken. Chastity vows, moreover, were to be renewed every three years. See Léonide Guiot, *La Mission du Su-tchuen au XVIII<sup>e</sup>me siècle*, pp. 335-339.

<sup>126</sup> Cf. F. G. de San Pedro, *Relation de la nouvelle persecution*, pp. 76-79.

<sup>127</sup> This phenomenon can of course be encountered in any monastic tradition. For mediaeval Christendom cf. Roberta Gilchrist, *Gender and Material Culture: The Archaeology of Religious Women*, London: Routledge 1994. Gilchrist, on page 19, refers to eroticism within the convent walls as a reinterpretation of physical tenderness - almost as a meditational exercise for the crucified Christ. In this context, see also Craig Harline, *The Burdens of Sister Margaret: Inside a Seventeenth-Century Convent*, London: Yale University Press 2000.

<sup>128</sup> See David Jordan, *Gods, Ghosts, and Ancestors*, p. 158, note 23, quoting Luigi Vannicelli, *La famiglia cinese: studio etnologico*, Milan: Società Editrice “Vita e Pensiero” 1943, p. 387.

phenomenon was nevertheless regarded, and frequently despised, as a purely “Christian” problem.<sup>129</sup>

## 6. *Inherited identity in Christian villages*

In the conversation between the old villager Ai 阿, of Nestorian descent, and Matteo Ricci we learn that the villager’s only knowledge of Christian liturgy was to make the sign of the cross before his meals, unable to recall its significance. We also learn of the readiness of the early Nestorians to combine conventional fatalism (a sceptical view of the power of protective spirits) with the new faith. Theological considerations were regarded as “beneficial words” (*yan haoshi* 言好词), whereas the emphasis remained on the earthly necessities of the peasantry (*xiajie bao pingan* 下界保平安).<sup>130</sup> One thousand years later on, following the arrival of missionaries from Catholic Europe, we can observe a similar propensity to amalgamate traditional notions with new religious teachings. After the Yongzheng edict of 1724, missionary activity outside the capital area and outside Macau had been prohibited. The practical consequences for the Christian communities depended very much on the attitudes of the provincial governor and of local magistrates, but even in areas with a more tolerant type of local administration, European missionaries found it virtually impossible to gain access to their erstwhile parishes. Under the prevailing conditions, converts who had been baptised by missionaries passed the essentials of the missionaries’ message on to their children, often lacking clerical guidance of any

---

<sup>129</sup> See APF SOCP, *Indie Orientali*, 1817, folium 13.

<sup>130</sup> See Gao Dianshi 高殿士, *Zhongguo lidai tonghua jizhu* 中国历代童话集注 “Edited Selection of Children’s Stories from China’s History”), [Jinan:] *Shandong daxue chubanshe* 山东大学出版社 1990, p. 417, where old Ai is erroneously referred to as being “Jewish” (*youtai* 犹太). Examples of similar ‘mix-ups’ of Jews and Nestorians are by no means confined to

form. While the perceptions of this first generation bore the clear imprint of popular religious traditions, subsequent generations accepted the interpretation of their Christian forebears by the sheer force of heredity: If the ancestors had been converted to the Sect of the Lord of Heaven, the progeny were expected if not to believe in its teachings then at least to respect them. Christianity had thus turned into a “hereditary” denominator, with theological considerations ranking second to those of ancestry.<sup>131</sup>

Following the edict of 1724, the European missionaries attempted to administer their former pastures clandestinely. From a legal case of 1746 involving foreign priests employed by the emperor for their “mathematical services” (*suanfa shiwu* 算方詩物) we learn that in the vicinity of the capital, such priests were in frequent contact not just with old converts, but also with their descendants. We also hear of Christians who regarded themselves as such because “their fathers had followed the faith” (*yin zushang guijiao* 因祖上歸教), but whose knowledge of Christianity’s doctrinal contents seemed limited to the “promotion of benevolence” (*quan ren wei shan* 勸人爲善) and the preservation of “common sense” (*pingchang daoli* 平常道理).<sup>132</sup> These second-generation Christians were supplied by the foreign missionaries with crucifixes, “sacred texts” and rosaries, to be

---

children’s literature and are referred to in Marshall Broomhall, *The Bible in China*, London: British and Foreign Bible Society 1934, p. 86.

<sup>131</sup> See R. H. C. Shek, “Religion and Society”, p. 295, for another example of “hereditary” influence: the leadership of Wang Sen’s family over the Yuandun movement. This example is also analysed in Susan Naquin “Connections between Rebellions”, where the author clearly demonstrates the importance of patrilinear transmission of beliefs in Chinese society.

Nicole Constable, following extensive research into the religious and social life of a Hakka 客家人 community in the New Territories of Hong Kong (Shung Him Tong or *Chongliantang* 崇利堂), concluded that Christianity reinforced the “ethnic” identity of the villagers. She also describes manifestations of the social pressure applied by parents to prevent their offspring from marrying outside the local (i.e. Christian and Hakka) community. See Nicole Constable, “The Village of Humble Worship”, pp. 1-14. See also her *Christian Souls and Chinese Spirits: A Hakka Community in Hong Kong*, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press 1994.

<sup>132</sup> QL 11/8/2, i.e. 16 September 1746, by Jiang Bing 江秉 (FHA, scroll 9258, original document 493, sub-number 26, frames 369-375). It is entitled: “Acknowledged report of the oral testimony concerning Fu Zuolin” ( 伏柱林口供實錄), in particular frames 371 and 372.

used for memorising the accompanying scriptures, usually through the medium of fellow Christians who visited the capital for commercial reasons. What may have appeared to the European missionaries as a commonplace method of facilitating the absorption of the Christian doctrine, was perceived by the Confucian officials as an act designed to lead commoners astray from the path of orthodoxy.<sup>133</sup> Rosaries, for instance, were also commonly used in Buddhist movements, such as the *Longhua* sect, where their beads were used as a mnemonic for the number of sutras recited.<sup>134</sup> For this reason, state officials assumed links to illegal movements whenever such cultic objects were found and applied the standard techniques of interrogation in order to extract the truth from their captives. Despite being repeatedly pressed for a positive answer, the defendants denied the existence of name registers in the churches. Such registers would of course have facilitated the work of the prosecuting state, revealing the identity of non-local actors, and in particular of the leaders of Christian communities in Beijing as well as in the surrounding districts of Zhili. The villagers also denied that the Europeans attempted to convert non-Christians, though they maintained that Christian paraphernalia was being exhibited regularly outside Beijing's churches in order to attract the curiosity of bypassers. The governor considered this a clear violation of the Yongzheng edict, and requested that the matter

---

<sup>133</sup> All over Catholic Europe, clerics attempted to overcome the obstacle of illiteracy by providing "symbols" of the faith, which could assist the congregations in memorising the Christian doctrines. Many of the European missionaries originated from the very classes most prone to absorbing non-orthodox ("superstitious"), local interpretations of Christianity. See Dorothy M. Meade, *The Medieval Church in England*, Worthing: Churchman Publications 1988, pp. 48-59 ("Superstitions" and "Saints and Pilgrimages").

<sup>134</sup> See de Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution in China*, p. 226, commenting on the use of rosaries (*suzhu* 数珠 or *nianzhu* 念珠) in the *Longhua* tradition. The belief that icons are able to absorb a certain degree of sanctity - thus becoming talismans and lucky charms - can also be observed in popular expressions of Catholicism. A feature of the mediaeval mass in Europe was to show the cover of the massbook to the congregation, who would then attempt to touch or kiss the ornate outer shell of the holy book in order to benefit from its holiness. Once the cover was assumed to have become holy, in some cases the book itself would be detached from the cover and kept separately for liturgical functions. See Martin Dudley, "The Book in the Liturgy: Ceremonies and Practicalities", unpublished

be taken up by the emperor in person. Regardless of whether the memorial had a decisive impact on the emperor's opinion, the remainder of the Qianlong period witnessed a steady tightening of the foreigners' freedom to act as missionaries within the capital region.<sup>135</sup>

A document referring to a thriving Christian community in the heartland of eastern China (Tongbo District 通波县, on the southern edge of Henan province), some forty-four years after the edict outlawing Christian practice outside Beijing and Macau, shed light on some of the theological interpretations of rural Christians in the eighteenth century.<sup>136</sup> It is of interest in the sense that it state officials were already on alert throughout eastern China at this time due to popular agitation caused by rumours of witchcraft and of nefarious Buddhist monks.<sup>137</sup> On day seven of the ninth month of the thirty-third year of the Qianlong period, i.e. 17 October 1768, Liu Tianxiang 刘天翔 and Feng Mingshan 冯明山, leaders of the Christian congregation of the locality of “Millipede Canal” (Yanyougou 蜒沟) were detained together with villagers for reasons of “practising and propagating Christianity, congregating crowds, [publicly] burning incense and chanting the scriptures”.<sup>138</sup> The culprits were taken to the chief official of Nanyang Prefecture 南阳府 in order to undergo investigation.

conference paper for *The Church and the Book* - Summer Conference of the Ecclesiastical History Society (19-22 July 2000, University of Wales, Lampeter/Llanbedr-Pont-Steffan).

<sup>135</sup> The emperor indeed endorsed Jiang Bing's memorial by adding "May this be used for general instruction" (□□□□□□□□) by his own hand. See FHA, scroll 9258 original document 493, sub-number 26, frame 373.

<sup>136</sup> Or at least of the way these elements of popular theology were perceived by the reporting officials - in this case Asiha 阿西哈, as chief inspector of Henan province. The document is simply entitled "Memorial concerning an investigation into Christianity" (調查基督教情形摺), and is kept at the First Historical Archives in Beijing as scroll 9258, original document 493, sub-number 32, frames 384-386. The memorial is dated QL 33/9/27, i.e. 6/11/1768. It can be inspected in print as "The Case of Christianity in Tongbo District, Henan" 河南銅波縣基督教情形 in volume twelve of *Shiliao xunkan* 史料叢刊, section 'Heaven', volume 12, pp. 421-424. The role of Asiha as president of the Censorate during the suppression of the Wang Lun rebellion of 1774 is outlined in S. Naquin, *Shantung Rebellion*, pp. 125-129.

<sup>137</sup> Illustrated as a running theme throughout Philip A. Kuhn, *Soulstealers*.

**Illustrated as a running theme throughout Philip H. Kohn's,**

Accompanying the prisoners were several objects connected with the forbidden cult: “Canonical scriptures” (*jingshu* 經書), “pictures and statues” (*huaxiang* 畫像), “bronze Buddhas” (*tongfo* 銅佛), “lists of pious admonitions” (*yudan* 諭單), (baptismal?) “name registers” (*qimingdan* 清名單) and “lists of virtuous behaviour” (*gongdan* 功單). The terminology, of unambiguous Buddhist origin, indicates that rural Christianity was perceived by the officials as one of the many “heretical” movements permeating the region. The “scriptures” and “statues” find their Buddhist counterpart in sutras and bodhisattva figurines, while the “brazen Buddha images” speak for themselves; the mention of “name registers” simply compounds the fear of organised insurrection, whereas both of the mentioned lists are reminiscent of the “ledgers of transgressions and meritorious deeds” (*gong-guo ge* 功過格), which had become an integral part of popular religious life during the 18th century.<sup>139</sup>

The interrogators were able to obtain confessions revealing the origins of the Christian community in Tongbo. Their ancestors were known to have migrated from Hubei and Hunan (known as the *Huguang* 湖廣 region) across the border into Henan province. It is clearly stated that they were already practising Christians (*zushang jiu feng tianzhujiao* 祖上久奉天主教). The first scriptures directly obtained from Christian missionaries in the capital Beijing reached the local communities via the Christian Yuan Huzi 袁胡子- “Bearded Mr Yuan”. The prohibitions against Christianity proclaimed during the early Qianlong period (QL 13 and 17, i.e. AD 1748 and 1752) had escaped their attention, with the effect that three years later, Yuan used a sojourn in Tongbo to propagate the message that Christianity was to admonish people to “lead a virtuous life, and to spread happiness for the sake of the life to

---

<sup>139</sup> Highly popular morality books divided human behaviour into moral categories of “good” (*gong* 功, i.e. merit) and “bad” (*guo* 過, i.e. demerit). See R. H. C. Shek, “Religion and Society”, p. 131,



come”.<sup>140</sup> The resulting interest in the teachings of the bearded disciple of the Lord of Heaven produced eighteen converts.<sup>141</sup> Asiha summarised the tenets of the rural heresy in the following words:

“Their belief merely urges people to respect the Ruler of the Universe,<sup>142</sup> and not to desire a debauched life style. Commoners who illegally enter the religion congregate in order to burn incense and to read aloud the scriptures. They do not regard hoarding money as a crime”.<sup>143</sup>

Their scriptures, we learn, had been passed down from their ancestors, apart from religious letters sent by Bearded Yuan from Beijing. Among the latter are several exhortations to abide by the periods set by the Church for fasting (*tianzhutang anyue chizhai* 天竺堂任何月持齋). Once per year in the winter (presumably around Christmas), the local Christians would receive a letter from Yuan. Upon entering their faith, the villagers would adopt religious names (literally “names of the law”, *faming* 奉名 - the term for the religious names of Buddhist priests). These would be allocated in front of the altar (*tianzhuwei* 天主位 literally “tablet of the Lord of Heaven” - tablets with the names of ancestors and of venerated persons of the past were an important element of worship, and commonly found in public temples), where

---

quoting a definition by Sakai Tadao.

<sup>140</sup> 天竺堂 anyue chizhai 天竺堂任何月持齋. See *Shiliao xunkan* 史料旬刊, section ‘Heaven’, volume 12, p. 421, where “Bearded Yuan” is mentioned as an activist in the Southern Cathedral and as an office-holder in the Board of Astronomy: 天竺堂 anyue chizhai 天竺堂任何月持齋.

<sup>141</sup> 天竺堂 anyue chizhai 天竺堂任何月持齋 i.e. male converts of both the parent and of the younger generations, not counting any female family members, who were outside the patrilinear ancestor system. The statement in Asiha’s second memorial that the entire family of Liu Tianxiang had become Christians (天竺堂 anyue chizhai 天竺堂任何月持齋) underlines that at least as many women were involved as well. Wang Zhichun, *Qingchao rouyuan ji*, p. 91, contains a brief reference to the prohibition of following “Portuguese Catholicism”, directed at China’s merchant profession (天竺堂 anyue chizhai 天竺堂任何月持齋). It is, however, quite likely that knowledge of such an edict never spread beyond the gates of China’s merchant cities.

<sup>142</sup> The characters 天竺堂 anyue chizhai 天竺堂任何月持齋 could also be read as “respect heaven, earth, father, mother”. To render them as above, however, would make more sense, as the term “mother-and-father” was a standard expression in imperial China for the “parental” role of the emperor and of his ministers - even of minor officials - towards the common people.

converts “cleansed their hearts and mended their faulty ways” (*xixin gaiguo* 新心改國) chanting sacred words and performing a liturgical ritual with the help of a book bearing the old inscription in Latin script. For security reasons, only their baptismal names would then be entered in a register, and it was common practice not to ask new believers for their original names or for their place of birth. From a statement extorted from the Suizhou ‘pastor’ (*huizhang* 會長) Wang Xiangsheng 王向生, we also learn that there were frequent contacts with fellow Christians from Suizhou 隨州, some seventy kilometres south of Tongbo in Hubei province, in particular when members of the Christian community in Tongbo died.<sup>144</sup>

We gain further insight into the case through a separate memorial, sent jointly by the circuit inspector for Hubei, Cheng Tao 程濤 and the governor-general of the Huguang double-province, Ding Zhang 丁張.<sup>145</sup> The document refers directly to the discovery of Christian communities in Henan. Cheng Shou and Ding Zhang, as the chief guardians of order in their provinces, followed up circuit inspector Asihā’s findings by tracing the provincial origin of the Tongbo elders to the Huguang.<sup>146</sup> Of “Bearded Yuan” we learn that he too originated from the Huguang, from Dawanggou 大岡溝 (the “Great Royal Canal”) of Sangyuan, Suizhou District 隨州府. After leaving his native village, his younger brother later recalled during the interrogation, the family lost touch with him for nearly five years. Only once, he stopped over on his way back from Chengdu, in Sichuan, where he had been chopping bamboo for a living, but after this date he had not been seen at home for

---

<sup>143</sup> 謝道暉, *Shiliao xunkan* 史料選刊, section ‘Heaven’, volume 12, p. 422.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 424.

<sup>145</sup> The memorial bears the title “Interrogation of the Christian Wang Xiangsheng et alii” (王向生等供詞); The memorial is filed as FHA, scroll 9258, original document 493, sub-number 33, frames 387-390 and dated QL 33/12/8, i.e. 13/1/1769.

more than ten years.<sup>147</sup> While in Beijing, he lodged with the European missionaries in the Southern Cathedral, or *Nantang* 南堂. His arrest by yamen officials uncovered a network of contacts around Wang Xiangsheng 王向生 between the elders of Christian localities in the region. Wang Xiangsheng, too, was a native of the Huguang, from Zhutigou 猪鬃沟 (“Pig’s Trotter Canal”) in Suizhou District. Having moved to a different locality in the same district, Quanergou 泉眼沟 (“Little Spring Canal”), ninety kilometres to the north of Suizhou, he married but remained without offspring. From the days of his childhood, he had followed the Christian instructions of his father meticulously. The officials noted that no “traces of statues, scriptures and illegal writings” had been discovered (*bingwu shenxiang jingjuan ji bufaziji* 并无神像经卷及不法字据). During his interrogation, he confessed that he “neither chanted the sutras nor worshipped the bodhisattvas” (*bingbu nianjing bu bai pusa* 并不念经礼拜菩萨), but that he knew and obeyed the Ten Commandments (*shijie* 十诫), which “admonished everybody to do good” (*quanren zuohao* 劝人作好). On the strength of his commitment to the Ten Commandments alone, Wang Xiangsheng became the elder of his Christian community. Thus he ensured that the youngsters in the village knew what he perceived to be the foundation of Christian ethics by heart. The Ten Commandments were renarrated thus:

“One: Obey and follow the Lord of Heaven; Two: Do not call out the name of the Lord of Heaven; Three: Honour the Day of Worship; Four: Revere your parents in filial respect; Five: Do not kill people; Six: Do not engage in corrupting activities; Seven: Do not steal or pilfer; Eight: Do not lie; Nine: Do

---

<sup>146</sup> They are described as “migrants originally from the Huguang, but now having settled in Tongbo” (□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□).

<sup>147</sup> *Ibidem*, frame 389.

not lust after somebody else's wife; Ten: Do not covet other people's wealth and property.”<sup>148</sup>

Wang Xiangsheng, and the group of fellow Christians<sup>149</sup> around the elder, persisted in the defence of their innocence. All Christians, except for one handyman employed by Wang Xiangsheng, added that they had followed the instructions of their fathers, and that there were no cultic practices the authorities may have construed as “heretical”. Most of all, the Christians had never attempted to “congregate crowds of fellow believers” (*tongjiaozhiren huijuyichu* 同教者人聚会一处) - very well aware of the officials' phobia of sectarian gatherings, and any resulting popular insurrections. No crucifixes or other liturgical instruments were found.<sup>150</sup> Asiha concluded that Liu Tianxiang and the other followers of the heresy were simple, “unrefined country folk” (*zhongdi xiangyu* 中地乡愚), who had been deluded by the rumours that by following Christianity one could perfect one's moral standards without breaking the law. The acquisition of European names, however, was in direct breach of China's traditions and could thus only inflict harm on social order. Hence his demand for drastic repercussions against the originators of the heretical creed in the capital:

“Liu Tianxiang and the others being investigated by myself are all ignorant commoners from the wilderness of the mountains. Confused by teachings originating from far away, they venerate the Lord of Heaven, burn incense, chant sutras, undergo spiritual exercises without any evil intentions. ... But for Chinese farming folk to change their names in accordance with those stipulated by the teachings of an alien religion ...

---

<sup>148</sup> 同教者人聚会一处 (ibidem).

<sup>149</sup> Their names listed include a Yuan Yunqing 袁运清 and his son Yuan Cunde 袁存德, the younger brother of the fugitive “Bearded Yuan”. *Ibidem*, frames 388-389.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibidem*, frame 390.

must be considered an act of heresy. By implanting unorthodox religious ideas, [Christianity] corrupts the morality of the common people.”<sup>151</sup>

The Huguang officials supported his findings, after an extensive investigation of nearly three hundred households in villages of the Suizhou area.<sup>152</sup> The final statement by Asiha provides further insight into the state’s perception of Christianity as a heterodox movement during the middle of the eighteenth century. Individuals are questioned, rings of sectarian leaders (*jiaozhang* 教長) uncovered and interrogated, and an important connection to the Christian congregations of the capital interrupted. However the official treatment of the Christians may seem to the contemporary reader, they are a far cry from the extermination campaigns against later millenarian movements. The Christian had engaged in “illegal” (*bufa* 不法) cultic activities, but were “merely” subjected to the standard punishment of caning, their lives having been spared. We finally learn that due to advanced age and illness, both Liu and Feng were excluded from the punishment meted out by the yamen caners.<sup>153</sup>

A further example of rural hereditary Christianity during the early years of the nineteenth century is the Christian village of Sanggu 桑古 in Zhili Province.<sup>154</sup> Protected through its remote position, only connected by “crooked and steep mountain paths” (*shanjing qiqu* 山徑崎嶇), the village had escaped earlier attempts to

---

<sup>151</sup> 據該處官員稱，該處居民多係天主教徒，其教義與儒家大相逕庭，且其教中多有異端，如稱耶穌為神，此等荒謬之說，實為惑亂人心，必須嚴加查辦。該處居民多係天主教徒，其教義與儒家大相逕庭，且其教中多有異端，如稱耶穌為神，此等荒謬之說，實為惑亂人心，必須嚴加查辦。該處居民多係天主教徒，其教義與儒家大相逕庭，且其教中多有異端，如稱耶穌為神，此等荒謬之說，實為惑亂人心，必須嚴加查辦。(i  
bidem).

<sup>152</sup> The localities listed in the memorial are all in the immediate vicinity of Suizhou: Zhutigou 豬蹄溝, Anbaodian 安巴店; Daaogou 大凹溝, Xiguan 西關, Matou 馬頭, Xindian 新店 and Weimiaogou 魏米溝 (total of 21 households). Searches in the localities Mengshan 孟山, Mupanshan 木盤山, Zhangchaobu 張抄布 and Chayuangou 柴羊溝 resulted in 219 investigations. *Ibidem*, frame 389.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibidem* and *Shiliao xunkan* 史料選刊, section ‘Heaven’, volume 12, p. 424.

<sup>154</sup> Wanping District 萬平縣, Shuntian Prefecture 順天府. In a document of 1806 the officials Shan Ying 山映, Tai Cheng'en 台承恩, Wan Ning 萬寧 and Chen Silong 陳世龍 submitted a memorial monitoring the effects of the persecution ordered by the Jiaqing emperor. See FHA, scroll 9258, original document 501, sub-numbers 16 and 17.

impose imperial prohibitions on Christianity. We learn of three native pastors,<sup>155</sup> accused of propagating “perverted teachings” by printing and concealing forbidden scriptures, and also that the Christian community had once embraced forty family units, listed according to their gender on baptismal registers. All the symbols connected with Christianity were found extant: The crucifix, icons and statues, flasks for containing foreign wine (*yangjiu* 洋酒-possibly for the Eucharist) and vessels for medical herbs, and maybe also for incense. Two interconnected churches, one for men, the other for women, were showing signs of neglect, but “had not been torn down yet” (*weijing zhegai* 未竟折改).<sup>156</sup> The officials, when interrogating the Christians, listened to the recurring statement that the villagers had merely “followed the traditions of their forefathers”. One renegade cited the dire economic circumstances caused by the death of his father as his reason for adhering to heretical teachings,<sup>157</sup> but others were less specific and indeed refused to see anything objectionable in their religious lives.

From a recorded testimony (*gongdan* 公单) obtained in 1767, we gain further insight into the motives of those Christian villagers who left their homes in order to search for European priests.<sup>158</sup> Commoner Wu Junshang 吴俊尚 of Xi Xia 西夏 village in Luling 庐陵 district is introduced as being “fifty-six years of age and only having one son, his wife already having passed away”. Contrary to the possibility that Wu Junshang converted to Christianity in the hope of divine grace

---

<sup>155</sup> The three ‘pastors’ were 张王公 Zhang Wengong, 张文成 Zhang Wencheng and 张文高 Zhang Wen’gao. The term *jiaoshou* 教首 literally means “Heads of Religion”, and is elsewhere rendered as *huizhang* 会长, or “Elders of the [Religious] Community”.

<sup>156</sup> ... in line with the prohibition by the Jiaqing emperor. *Ibidem*, frame 17.

<sup>157</sup> 吴俊尚; see FHA, scroll 9258, original document 493, sub-number 33, frame 389.

<sup>158</sup> The *confessions* are part of an investigation carried by the circuit official for Jiangxi Province, Wu Shaoshi 吴少时, and are dated QL 32/9/7, i.e. 29/10/1767. They can be consulted as FHA, scroll 9258, original document 492, sub-number 17, frames 324-330.

being bestowed upon him in the form of a new wife and more children, we learn that he had indeed "inherited" the belief from his father, a convert from the Yongzheng period. Following the death of his father, Wu Junshang had abandoned his faith (*fuqin sigu meiyou fengjiao* 父亡後因喪而廢教). When in QL 21 (1756) his fellow villager Liu Ruohan 劉若翰 invited the foreign Christian "Lin Ruohan" 林若翰 to preach in their village, Wu Junshang reverted to his native religious denomination, and started to use his baptismal name Peter (*Baiduolu* 巴都魯), while his son Wu Liangwei 吳亮偉 was encouraged to use his Christian name Andrew (*Ande* 安德). Because the stranger lacked accommodation, Wu Shangjun, his cousin Wu Weisan 吳維三, a Xiao Xiangsheng 蕭向生 and his brothers, plus Liu Ruohan provided the finances, twenty-two ounces of silver currency in total, to purchase him an abode. The defendant made a clear point of not having participated in any "charms, spells, black magic or any other illegal acts", apart from obeying the rules of fasting.<sup>159</sup> Wu Junshang furthermore specified that - following the arrest of the missionary one year later - their religious activities did not involve any chanting of scriptures (*nianjing* 念經), but instead were limited to "fasting for eight days every month, according to their traditions" (*meiyue zhaochang chi-ba-ri-su* 每月照常吃八日素). When questioned about his religious ideas, both Wu Junshang and Xiao Xiangsheng responded that it simply consisted of the belief that "Christianity urged people to improve their character and that Christians would reach a better place after their death".<sup>160</sup> From their parents, these Christians of the second generation had inherited paraphernalia such as "Female Statues" (depicting, by all probability, Mary), "scrolls and statues" (Jesus and/or saints), "rosaries" (*nianzhu*

---

<sup>159</sup> 父亡後因喪而廢教 (ibidem).

<sup>160</sup> 每月照常吃八日素 (ibidem).

□□□□), “crucifixes” and “sacred scriptures”, though only one volume is mentioned. All of these had been bestowed upon the Christians and their families when the European Lin Ruohan visited the village, and were not seen as “illegal”. Christians also adopted baptismal names, which were used within the families of the village, and which may have been allocated by Liu Ruohan himself. The elders (*wei shou de ren* □□□□□□□□) obtained a regular payment, which they saved in order to accrue a little interest. This could be used for solidarity payments for fellow Christians, for instance to pay for barge and ferry fees while travelling.

Missionary correspondence written at the beginning of the nineteenth century show that one generation later conditions were largely unchanged. During the course of a conversation between the Mgr. Emmanuelle Di Goldino from Macau and two peasants referring to themselves as “Christians”, one of the villagers conceded that he had never been baptised. Nevertheless he proclaimed with insistence that he was a genuine Christian “as both his father and his grandfather had been so” (*perchè il suo padre lo fu, ed il suo Nonno*).<sup>161</sup> When Goldino questioned the reasons for his unbaptised state, the peasant explained that this was due to the long absence of missionaries from his district, the last missionary having visited the area before he was even born. The *Monsignore* continued by testing his knowledge of the Christian faith, discovering that the villagers were hardly familiar with any of the basic doctrines of the Catholic faith. The rural Christians were also ignorant of how to make the sign of the cross and how to say the Our Father. Knowledge of the Creed was close to non-

---

<sup>161</sup> Translated from a letter to the Vatican by Emanuele D. Goldino, attaché of the Portuguese ecclesiastic administration of Goa, sent to Rome from Macau in October 1806. See APF SC, series III, *Cina et Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, folia 195-196.



existent, and that of other elements of their faith curtailed by the fact that they were not aware of any priests in the vicinity of their district.<sup>162</sup>

From the beginning of the nineteenth century, with the arrival of more missionaries from Europe, reported encounters with Chinese commoners referring to themselves as “Christians” increased in frequency. In his report on the consequences of the persecution of the early Jiaqing years in Shanxi, Antonio Luigi da Signa delivered a detailed account of the plight of the persecuted Christians.<sup>163</sup> Most Christians, according to da Signa, were poor tillers, who had simple views of the world. Da Signa drew his knowledge from extended sojourns with the peasantry, usually by staying with the families of recently converted Christians. One such convert is described as *un de fedeli impaurito più che narrar si possa, coltivator di terra da me poco fa bautezzato*.<sup>164</sup> Their knowledge of Christianity was limited to what their forefathers had passed on to their generation - to lead a people to the road of virtue. In any case, since the cult had been passed on for several generations, it would simply not be right to abandon it.<sup>165</sup> Official sources from the early nineteenth century suggest that Christians from distant villages at times professed to have been ignorant of imperial decrees against the proselytisation of their religion - although they were likely to be aware that such lack of knowledge was likely to attenuate the verdict of

---

<sup>162</sup> Same source, folium 195R. See also the - much earlier - observation in F. Margiotti, *Il cattolismo nello Shansi*, p. 189.

<sup>163</sup> Letter by A. Luigi da Signa from *Pu Huo* (Shanxi), 7 March 1806. Recorded as APF document SC, series III, *Cina and Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, ff. 105-111.

<sup>164</sup> “... one of the faithful, more impoverished than can be described with words, a tiller who had recently been converted by me”; *ibidem*, folium 105.

<sup>165</sup> The original wording (*ibidem*, folium 108): *La Sagra Religione non ha niente di male, anzi all’opposto dirigendo essa l’uomo in la buona via della virtù. Venuta [dagli antinati]... non era giusto il renegarla* (“There is nothing evil about the Holy Religion, and on the contrary, it leads man to a good life of virtue. Since it has been passed on [from the ancestors] ... it felt not right to abandon it”). The words refer to the trial against the family members of Mauro Li, addressed on page 264 of this thesis.



“... in the Truth of God’s word..., [baptism] is a guarantee that we will enter Heaven after our mortal end. Also, that the water in the Bottle for Sacred Water washes away all evil.”<sup>168</sup>

Since she insisted on not having entered a church, nor of having stored Christian artefacts in her home, she asked to be pardoned. In this case, officials made use of tensions within Christian families in order to locate the chief “heretic”. A further example of this policy is preserved in a memorial describing the discovery of an underground Christian community in the imperial capital in the year 1817. Following the discovery of crucifixes and of statues, some of the suspects were forced to apostatise by stepping on a crucifix. After this test, one of the apostates accounted for the reasons of adhering to the old faith, blaming their maternal aunt for introducing the creed into the family circle.<sup>169</sup>

The above examples highlight the integration of Christianity into the religious landscape of late imperial China. The general conclusion is that the “religious” element of the Christian tradition had been reduced to a minimum, with the emphasis of the Christians’ tradition gradually shifting to the symbols of their faith. Owing to the absence of spiritual guidance, such outward signs were instrumental in preserving the unity of Christian families and communities. Being loyal to one’s Christian ancestors was now the essence of what it meant to be a “good Christian”. The concept of ‘religious filiality’ thus united China’s Christian communities with other expressions of popular religiosity.

---

168

Se eFHA, scroll 9261, original document 501, sub-number 18. Officials: The Inspector of the Capital’s Eastern District ( ) Heng An and Wang Yanbo

### **7. Itinerant Christians, private religious practice and the interest of the state**

Whereas the Christians of China's villages routinely stressed the innocuous, private nature of their cult, the investigating state officials were chiefly concerned with the practical threat to social stability emanating from China's numerous religious movements. In order to draw the right conclusions relating to the identity of religious groups, including potential connections with fellow sectarians, information relating to the "private lives" of sectarians could become an important source of state intelligence. Though the religious habits of individual households or villages usually remained unpoliced, the state considered it a grave offence to pass on heterodox teachings to fellow villagers (*xi-chuan xiejiao* 習傳邪教) - and possibly beyond - as this was contrary to the magistrates' efforts to keep the activities of religious movements under control.<sup>170</sup> Fears of involvement of secret societies were compounded by the professed "private" habit of fasting (or of abstaining from meat, *chi-zhai* 齋) on every sixth and seventh day of the month. Vegetarian habits were usually associated with movements influenced by Buddhism, in particular after the White Lotus uprising in 1796. "White Lotus" (*bailian* 白蓮) was a vaguely defined collective term often used when the precise nature of a sectarian movement was unknown.<sup>171</sup> It is hence conceivable that Christian villagers with no obvious foreign connections were classified by confused magistrates as belonging to the same movement.<sup>172</sup> Though not directly applied, the private habits of a clandestine Christian community in Shaanxi Province, mentioned in a memorial of the year 1805, created a

---

<sup>169</sup> FHA, scroll 9261, original document 501, sub-number 20, frames 872-878. The memorial is dated 23/12/1817.

<sup>170</sup> The first chapter of Part III (i.e. chapter 6, pp. 178-192) is devoted to the relationship between the state and religious movements.

<sup>171</sup> See Philip A. Kuhn, *Soulstealers*, p. 224.

link with the vegetarians of the White Lotus.<sup>173</sup> The document makes specific mention of the absence of church buildings and a clergy, stressing that the Christian villagers, led by the academic Gong Agui and a certain Liu Shichang, chose to “chant their sutras privately in their homes”.<sup>174</sup> The subversive element of this secretive cult was to “send letters and to congregate crowds” for the propagation of their faith (*juzhong tongxin* 中西同信) - following the pattern of White Lotus activities in other parts of China. From another memorial<sup>175</sup> from the year 1806 we learn that in some cases there were no external *communal* signs of Christian practice at all - no public churches, no clerical organisation, no openly visible crucifixes or Christian writings. Yet the villagers professed to be Christians by merit of, in the words of the official, having “inherited the sins of their forefathers.”<sup>176</sup>

Be it for the sake of finding excuses or for genuine filial feelings, the statement of having “followed their religious practices from childhood” (*ziyou rujiao* 自幼入教) was used as a universal declaration of defendants from Christian communities. That it may have been more than a ploy to regain their liberty from the magistral interrogators becomes apparent in cases involving “repeat offenders”, who had to suffer for their religious affiliation without ever deciding to abandon it. One

---

<sup>172</sup> The Jesuits missionaries of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries regularly encountered converts reluctant to abandon their vegetarian habits. A “relapse” into vegetarianism was hence more than likely following the departure of a missionary. See F. Margiotti, *Il cattolicesimo nello Shansi*, pp. 351-352.

<sup>173</sup> 卷9261, original document 503, sub-number 39, on the sixteenth day of the intercalary six month of the tenth year the Jiaqing reign period (10/8/1805). Daniel Bays suggests deeply entrenched vegetarian beliefs as a reason for the popularity of Christianity (the Eucharist in particular) during the latter part of the nineteenth century. See Daniel Bays, “Christianity and the Chinese Sectarial Tradition”, pp. 41 and 47.

<sup>174</sup> 卷9261, original document 503, sub-number 39: 中西同信

<sup>175</sup> See FHA, scroll 9261, original document 408, sub-number 21. The memorial commenting on Christianity in Sichuan stresses the private character of Christian practice, i.e. the absence of public institutions.

<sup>176</sup> See also the account of the apostate (*yijiaofan* 已教反, i. e. “former faith offender”) Kui Min 奎敏 in a memorial of 1814 (FHA, scroll 9261, original document 501, sub-number 12), where the

such example is Xie Wenshan 謝文山, of Dageng District 大岡區, Jiangxi Province.<sup>177</sup> We learn that Xie Wenshan, a sexagenarian with the Christian name Ignatius (*Yin-na-jue* 音那覺), had been arrested for dealings with the foreigner “Wang An-duo-ni” in Suzhou in 1748. Following his release caused by a general amnesty in the first month of the seventeenth Qianlong year (i.e. June 1749), Xie Wenshan managed to follow his religious activities unnoticed. This changed in the February of 1752, when he decided to heed the recommendation of Macau’s bishop to accompany the newly arrived foreign missionaries through the canals and country lanes of Guangdong province to the city of Songjiang in the Jiangnan.<sup>178</sup> His fellow Christian Wang Qinyi 王勤伊 followed Xie Wenshan’s example, accompanying the foreigners through the Cantonese hinterland, and arranging for fishing boats to be hired for their use. He, and another eight named Christians from the same area,<sup>179</sup> furthermore consented to distributing “religious tracts” (*zhaidan* 齋單) among the non-Christian population, and to act as couriers for missionary correspondence, and for general contacts between Beijing, Macau and the Christian centres in adjacent provinces. The Chinese Christians had thus, alongside their foreign confrères, transgressed the imperial ban on any Christian missionary activity within the empire. The documentation at no stage suggests that they had been pressurised into assisting the foreign missionaries. Nor does the material indicate a qualitative difference in the official judgement on the two groups of Christians involved: Foreign and local

---

“fault” for the aberrant behaviour of the son was clearly ascribed to the forefathers (謝文山等).

<sup>177</sup> From a document simply entitled “Confessions” (*gongdan* 公單), FHA, scroll 9258, original document 492, sub-number 9, frame 303-306.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibidem*, frame 303.

<sup>179</sup> The names (and districts) of the eight are Zou Hansan 邹 Hansan (Zhaowen District 趙文區), Ding Liangxian 丁良仙 (Changzhou District 常州區), Shen Gongjie 申公捷 (Nanhui District 南匯區), Wu Xizhou 吳錫周 (Fengjian District 鳳建區), Zhang Yuying 張玉映 (Nanhui District 南匯區), Zhou Jingyun 周景雲 (Lou District/Songjiang

Christians alike had violated Qing statutes by the simple fact of having acted as missionaries of their cultic beliefs. “Following the faith of their forefathers” was thus deemed acceptable by the prosecuting state - at least for commoners among the Han population. Proselytising their faith, however, could not be tolerated, lest the fragile social equilibrium be upset. In a memorial from the year 1815, focusing on the Gubei 瓜北 *baojia* 瓜北 in Zhili Province,<sup>180</sup> reference is made to twenty Christian households which remained loyal to the faith of their forefathers despite the current prohibition. Their illegal creed had been exacerbated by proselytising Westerners who entered the *baojia* in the 1805. Whether the Christian objects (pictures and statues, religious writings, rosaries, crucifixes, etc.) found in the homes of the heretics were to be attributed to the foreigners or to the Christians’ ancestors remains unclear. A further example of adherence to the religious identity of the village community can be found in the exclamations of Cantonese peasants who had been forced to flee their native village for fear of reprisals. The villagers expressed their gratitude for the offer by neighbouring (foreign) missionaries to accommodate them and to alleviate their poverty, but they were simply “unable to leave behind parents, old mothers and tender children, because this would go against the fourth commandment”.<sup>181</sup>

The itinerant professions had always been regarded with great scepticism by the state, as destabilising factors in a rural society difficult to control. Another document underlining the involvement of travelling individuals in the dissemination of popular beliefs comes from the year 1798, when the itinerant medic “Mr. Guo”

---

瓜北 (Shen Madou 瓜北 (Jiangning District 瓜北) and Ni Dezai 瓜北 (Changshu District 瓜北)).

<sup>180</sup> Reported by Xu Kun 徐坤. See FHA, scroll 9261, original document 503, sub-number 13.

<sup>181</sup> .... and, it could be added, against the Confucian commandment of filial piety. Conveyed in a letter by E. D. de S. Goldino, bishop of Macau, around the year 1806; cf. APF source SOCP, *Indie Orientali* 1817, f 37 V.

□□□□ was found guilty of spreading heretical teachings and of distributing Christian paraphernalia. A female villager interrogated by state officials claimed to having been steadfast against his evil teachings by seeking the guidance of a trusted mentor. Her aunt, however, had always been loyal to the creed, hiding a crucifix in a little wooden box inside her room. The accused professed to having followed the doctor during his stay within the imperial capital, but had abstained from his belief out of fear of prosecution, following the imperial edict of 1811.<sup>182</sup> In another document we hear of a barber who had established a venue for “chanting the scriptures” in his shop, which he decorated with a signpost bearing Christian writings.<sup>183</sup> Thus he was guilty of “soliciting disciples and confusing the masses” (*chuan-tu huo-zhong* □□□□□□□□). In a statement indicating the existing links between Christians from different provinces, Wu Junshang went on to report how Jiang Rikui □□□□□□, a commoner of Wan’an □□□□ District, adjourned in his home while purchasing fabrics in the nearby village of Xiaxia. The three veteran Christians Wu Junshang, Wu Weisan and Xiao Xiangsheng conferred with the itinerant medic (*xing-yisheng* □□□□□□), and concluded that too many years had gone by without somebody having been present to teach the Christian villagers more about their faith, and indeed that the religion was in danger of perishing.<sup>184</sup> When the doctor from Wan’an district made his intention known of travelling to Guangdong province in order to buy pharmaceutical herbs, the villagers suggested that he investigate the whereabouts of the foreign priest Lin Ruohan who had visited them one decade earlier. In the case of Lin having returned to Europe, Jiang Rikui would endeavour to find another priest who could instruct the

---

<sup>182</sup> See the above-mentioned FHA, scroll 9261, original document 501, sub-number 20, frames 872-878. The reporting official is the Clan Court administrator Mian Ke. The memorial is dated 23/12/1817.

<sup>183</sup> Reporting officers: Ying He □□□□ and Mu Zhang’a □□□□□□. See FHA, scroll 9261, original document 501, sub-number 22.



villagers in the teachings of Christianity. This, we learn from an accompanying memorial,<sup>185</sup> had indeed been the case. Instead of “Father Lin”, Wu Junshang and Jiang Rikui returned with a certain “Alien Monk 'Andangnedu' 西方人 from Europe in the West”,<sup>186</sup> of whom the authorities already had a criminal record for proselytising in Jiangxi province. The Christians ignored a stern admonition by Jiang Rikui’s father, Jiang Yunshan 江允山, that Christianity had been proscribed, and prepared for his journey to Guangdong by collecting a travel stipend. Jiang Rikui and Wu Shangjun walked for several days, using the homes of Christians as their shelter for the night. Wu Junshang later denied any collusion with Christians from other districts, apart from four names mentioned in his testimony. This can be interpreted as a tactical denial aimed at assuaging the suspicions of the investigating officials, or may stem from the genuine conviction that his beliefs were chiefly a continuation of a tradition taken over from his father, and perpetuated by his own son. The long list of Christian fathers and of their sons (fifteen main defendants, ranging from eighteen years of age to over seventy; wives and daughters are conspicuous by their absence in practically all name lists) suggests that the preservation and propagation of Christianity was very much of an internal clan and village affair. Christianity, as perceived and practised by the second generation of Christian converts, had thus become a marker of intra-village affinity, with theological and ritual awareness

---

<sup>184</sup> 西方人 (ibidem).

<sup>185</sup> The memorial was co-drafted by the circuit official for Guangdong Province Zhong Yin 鍾寅, and by the Governor-general for the Liangguang double-province Li Shiyao 李時堯 and is dated QL 32/10/14, i.e. 4/12/1767. See FHA, scroll 9258, original document 492, sub-number 18, frames 327-339.

<sup>186</sup> 西方人 (ibidem, frame 334) The case is mentioned, though not analysed, in Ma Zhao, “Shilun Qianlong shiqi (1736-1796) chajin tianzhujiao shijian”, p. 42. “Father Lin”, whose identity is not clear, is already mentioned on p. 162.

<sup>187</sup> This view is compounded by the surprising statement by one villager of sixty-four years of age, claiming that he had “used the rosaries for the sake of memorising the scriptures” - without actually knowing that these scriptures were not “Buddhist” in nature (□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□). See *ibidem*, frame 327: testimony by Chao Wan □□□□, baptismal name Paul (*Baolu* □□□□).

<sup>189</sup> This route was described in great detail by the attaché (*coadjutore*) of the Archbishop of Goa in a letter written in Macau in 1806, filed at the APF as document SC, series III, *Cina et Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, f. 195-196.

178

concerning the composition of the clergy after the persecutions of the year 1811 reveal an interesting picture: The majority of the named Chinese priests had inherited the prejudices felt by their European predecessors with reference to the tensions between the padroado missions and the Propagandists. The detail indicates the degree to which, at the close of the century of prohibition, the Christian missionary enterprise had been taken over by Chinese “ethnics”.<sup>191</sup>

Not all Europeans agreed with the increasing profile of itinerant Chinese clerics.<sup>192</sup> In contrast to the relative leniency conceded to local Christian communities, investigating officials attempted to eradicate itinerant Chinese priests from the countryside. When Chinese missionaries were encountered by state officials, their treatment was by no means more lenient than that of the leaders of other religious movements. The collusion of Chinese nationals with European priests was seen as an aggravating offence. Such priests were seen as “intruders”, enticing villagers to adhere to a “sectarian heresy” (*zuodao yiduan* 左道一断) aimed at “confounding the common people” (*shanhuo minren* 煽惑民人). The punishment was concomitantly harsh: Death through strangulation, enslavement with the Ningut tribes of the Heilongjiang and with the Wula warriors of Jilin, and serious caning for ordinary Christians.<sup>193</sup> Capital punishment could be commuted to banishment to the

---

<sup>191</sup> The reference to the Zhaojiazhuang congregation is part of the letter by Cardinal Dufresse to Rome on 20 June 1813, mentioning the following Christians: Paul Li 李保良, John Ren 任德, Quintus Zhang 张德, Felix Hu 胡德 and Jacob Li 李德. See APF document SC, series III, *Cina e Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, folium 205.

<sup>192</sup> Critical words can be found, for instance, in the letter sent by G. B. Marchini from Macau, 8 December 1806. He concluded that “Chinese missionaries alone could under no circumstances support the Chinese mission for a longer period” (*che la Christiana Religione abbandonata ai soli sacerdoti nazionali non potrebbe longamente susistere in quest’ imperio*). See APF file SC, series III, *Cina e Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, ff. 235-238.

<sup>193</sup> FHA, scroll 9258, original document 492, sub-number 18, frames 335-337.

outer fringes of the empire - Yili, Mongolia and the Manchurian north in particular - which entailed enslavement to a non-Han master - a fate dreaded more than death.<sup>194</sup>

Another vital clue with reference to the survival of Christianity during the eighteenth century is provided in a memorial from Maoshandan 玛纳斯 district in Zhili Province. Zhao Chun 赵春 and his kinsmen Zhao Ren 赵仁, Zhao Guotai 赵国太, Zhao Guowang 赵国旺, Zhao Guoxin 赵国新, plus another dozen villagers all professed having followed their parents and grandparents in the practising of Christianity.<sup>195</sup> The morally unpardonable factor was not the mere fact of belonging by merit of birth to a heretical movement, but in the refusal of the accused to mend their evil ways (*hu'e buquan* 悔过不虔).<sup>196</sup> This verdict was compounded by an allegation brought to the emperor's attention via the official He Ning, that the accused had been preparing for rebellion against the state. Relying on a loose bond of mutual loyalty between the clan leaders, village elders and yamen officials, magistrates were compelled to view outside interference with great suspicion. In this case, there were two allegations: Firstly of illegally sheltering Westerners, and secondly of establishing contacts with natives of Xinjiang - Muslims who had been exposed to the teachings of the Christian criminals.<sup>197</sup> In a similar discovery in the summer of 1800, Christian materials designed to "confuse the masses" (*huozhong* 惑众) were confiscated in

---

<sup>194</sup> The legal basis of exile to the outer regions of the empire are spelt out in Joanna Waley-Cohen, *Exile in Mid-Qing China: Banishment to Xinjiang, 1758-1820*, New Haven: Yale University Press 1991.

<sup>195</sup> 赵春等供词. *Ibidem*.

<sup>196</sup> Reported in lengthy memorials throughout the year 1815 by Na Yancheng 纳颜程. See, for instance, FHA, scroll 9261, original document 501, sub-number 14. On Na Yancheng's involvement in the suppression of the 1799 White Lotus rebellion, see de Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution*, pp. 362 and 720 ff.

<sup>197</sup> 赵春等供词. See FHA, scroll 9261, original document 501, sub-number 15. The official investigator was He Ning 何宁.

the southern province of Guizhou.<sup>198</sup> The main accusation was that around the year 1784, “outsiders” from Sichuan had brought Christian teachings (*yangjiao* 洋教) into the villages of district.<sup>199</sup> As a consequence, the memorial concluded, the heresy had been passed on to the “good villagers of the hinterland” (*neidi liangmin* 內地良民), from the parents to the siblings - thus becoming a “hereditary” feature of the villagers’ social culture.<sup>200</sup>

This observation is corroborated by missionary reports from the early nineteenth century, illustrating the unbroken continuity of Christianity in certain parts of the Han provinces. Antonius de Calatia, for instance, was full of praise for his missionary flock distributed in the mountainous provinces of Shanxi and Shaanxi. Whereas other congregations had to struggle with the corrupting influences of rival - usually Buddhist - cults, the whole of his mission was allegedly free or almost free of (“superstitious”) ancestral tablets and of the images of Confucius and other *sheng* (“saints”).<sup>201</sup> Regardless of whether or not de Calatia's observations had been cosmetically enhanced for a European audience, the situation in Shanxi and Shaanxi was indeed more stable than in other parts of the empire. Not for reasons of imperial

---

<sup>198</sup>

洋教. Memorialised by Chang Ming 常明 on 21/7/1800. See FHA, scroll 9261, original document 501, sub-number 37.

<sup>199</sup> The term “Foreign Teachings” (*yangjiao* 洋教) is probably - in its derogatory, mildly xenophobic sense - as old as the religion of the foreign missionaries in China itself. In eighteenth century documents, the term is encountered sporadically, although mostly the more official *Tianzhujiao* was used. Towards the turn of the century, however, with more foreign missionaries being intercepted at the borders, the term experienced a renaissance.

<sup>200</sup> The influence of ancestral affiliation was of course also a feature of other religious movements. Of the Eight Trigrams uprising in 1813 we learn that many “sectarians” were encouraged to resist the government campaign by honouring the physical presence of their buried forebears. This fact enraged the Qing officials to such an extent that they sought to destroy their decomposed remnants, “so that the spirit of mischief be eliminated” 邪氣消除. See de Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution*, p. 446.

<sup>201</sup> *Dènum in Missione una nulla vel paucissimae sunt progenitorum effigies, Confucii tamen aliorumque pro quo sanctis habet ethnica superstitio imagines quaedam vel effigies in fanis ...* (“For in our mission, there are no or only very few likenesses of ancestors, and in the temples there are no or very few pictures or likenesses of Confucius or of others regarded as sacred by indigenous

benevolence, however: The toll paid by the - foreign and Chinese - missionaries was high, with persecutions extending to all cities of the region. Neither because the ecclesiastic structure would have provided support: The missionaries of Shanxi were, on the contrary, well known for their ability to sow discord amongst each other.<sup>202</sup> It is therefore not astounding that in 1806 the Propaganda missionary Giovanni Antonio di Pompejana wrote that “the Shanxi diocese [*sic*] ought to be divided up, in order to prevent further discord and harm to the faithful”.<sup>203</sup> The resilience of the local Christian community was more due to other factors: Remoteness from the centres of administrative power, the uncharted mountain terrain, high levels of poverty - all factors which encouraged the growth of popular religious movements.<sup>204</sup> The success of these Christian communities in the region also encouraged foreign missionary orders to send further missionaries. The contacts with the *Collegio de' Cinesi* in Naples is a case in point.<sup>205</sup>

---

superstition”; excerpted from a letter written in October 1806). See APF SC, series III, *Cina et Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, f. 174 V.

<sup>202</sup> The veteran missionary Charles Tan, at the turn of the century, left the mission, because of exhaustion (*victus miserias relinquit missionem*), Joseph Li (aka Peter Zai) fled to Guangzhou, for fear of his life, where he died. Meanwhile, Philip Li returned to Shanxi, weakened from his exile in Yili. See APF SC, series III, *Cina et Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, f. 138 V.

<sup>203</sup> Letter despatched from *Henceu*, Huguang on 29 October 1806. Cf. APF SC, series III, *Cina et Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, ff. 175-178. The discord was mainly caused by an unfortunate constellation of strong characters, in particular of the missionaries Mauro Li (*uomo di non molto coraggio* - “a man of little courage”, folium 175), Nicollao Hô (who was demanding money from the College in Naples), the ex-Jesuit Porroghesi and the infamous womaniser Paulus Van (cf. p. 296 and his confession in Appendix 2). The term “diocese” course stands for the “missionary area” of Shanxi.

<sup>204</sup> Confirmed by the report that young *alunni* from all provinces were welcomed with open arms by rural Christian communities in Shanxi and Shaanxi. See APF SC, series III, *Cina et Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, folium 107 V. Luigi da Signa’s letter also contains a list of new Chinese missionaries in northern and central China, at the turn of the century. For the general background up to 1738, see Fortunato Margiotti, *Il Cattolismo nello Shansi*.

<sup>205</sup> Cf. J. Emanuel, “Matteo Ripa and the Foundation of the College of Naples”, in: *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft* XXXVII-2 (1981), pp. 131-140. See also the letter by Giovanni Battista Marchini (16 October 1806, Macau), referring to a letter sent to him by Claude-François Létondal (MEP, 1753-1813). Marchini and Létondal refer to the connection with the Collegio de’ Cinesi of a certain *alunno* Giacomo Li (see folium 161 V). Létondal had been dispatched from Macau to Penang in 1807, in order to set up a seminary there. Cf. APF document SC, series III, *Cina et Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, folium 161.

The documents analysed in this second part illustrated some of the most concrete aspects of Christian inculturation during the eighteenth century, by providing insight into the social and ritual lives of Christian households. In the following third part the analytical angle will be reversed, in order to view the phenomenon of mid-Qing Christianity through the eyes of the state. Part Three will begin by discussing the crucial concepts of orthodoxy, heterodoxy and heresy, before we turn our attention to the concrete relationship between the Qing state and indigenous Christianity.

### **Part III      A Protective Father: Official Perceptions of Christianity and government action against sectarian movements**

#### **Chapter 6:    The philosophical basis for anti-heresy campaigns**

Long before the advent of the Chinese Communist movement, the governing authorities had looked askance at displays of religiosity not condoned as orthodox. The propensity towards religion within the ruling bureaucracy may well have varied in accordance with time and location, but the Chinese *literatus* was intrinsically a sceptic, brought up to remember that “Master Confucius never discussed violence, chaos, strange occurrences and spirits” (□□□□□□□□□□□□).<sup>1</sup> Throughout its history, Chinese officialdom has applied the anti-metaphysical attitude of Confucianism to the religious movements of the time. And through the kaleidoscope of the literary tradition, Confucian scepticism has also found its place in China’s popular culture - almost as an equal alongside the great religious traditions.<sup>2</sup> This third part of the thesis is intended to illustrate the intellectual background and moral disposition of the officials who were expected to take action against Christianity during the century of prohibition. It will also highlight perceptions of Christianity and of other religious movements as expressions of “heresy”, and explain the purpose of the punitive measures adopted by the state in order to contain these. In conclusion, the

---

<sup>1</sup> Instead, the gentleman was encouraged to “respect ghosts and spirits but kept them at a distance” (□□□□□□□□□□). See James Legge (transl. and ed.), *The Chinese Classics with a Translation, Critical & Exegetical, Notes Prolegomena, and Copious Indexes*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press 1960, volume I: *Analects (Lunyu)* □□□□, chapter VI-20, “Yong ye” “□□□□” (pp. 184-194).

<sup>2</sup> Pu Songling □□□□□(1640-1715) described the consequences of allowing oneself to be carried away by undue interest in the metaphysical. See “Bihua □□□□” (“The Mural”), in: *Liaozhai zhiyi* □□□□□□□□, published around 1700 and republished, for instance, in Jinan by *Qilu chubanshe* □□□□□□□□ in 1981. See also the translation by Herbert A. Giles and Herbert Allen, *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio*, Shanghai: Kelly and Welsh 1908. It has to be stressed, however, that a good grasp of Confucian principles and adherence to religious societies were by no means mutually exclusive. The *baojuan* of the early Qing period demonstrate very clearly that popular Buddhism had absorbed many of the values propagated by the Confucian educators of the Song and Ming dynasties. See D. Overmyer, *Precious Volumes*, p. 229.



following part will attempt to illustrate how the views and reactions of the state officials can be regarded as proof of Christianity's successful inculturation, as a result of more than one hundred years of official prohibition.

### **1. *The Confucian order and the importance of family ties***

Instead of encouraging metaphysical speculation, Confucianism idealised “harmony” (*datong* 大同) within human society, brought about by hierarchical, patrilinear stratification. Confucian orthodoxy has always defended this view of human (i.e. Chinese) society as the most “natural” social formation. If harmony was imperilled by the unjustified appropriation of social positions (*ming* 名), the “natural” social hierarchy had to be reinstated (“rectified” *zheng* 正) by the imperial administration. Social rectification (*zhengming* 正名) was to be achieved through educative measures rather than punishment, and was based on the social harmony which supposedly ruled in the homes of the unsophisticated peasantry. In mutual causality, fathers were to benevolently respect their sons, whereas sons subjected their lives in filial piety to their fathers; if brothers respected each other as good friends, the outcome for the entire household would be harmonious.<sup>3</sup> Cooperation in the division of land and the communal use of agricultural utensils, as well as the coordination of the irrigation systems were indispensable elements for upholding a sense of social balance. The social fabric of farming communities was based on blood affiliation and was kept together through common ancestral origin, stronger even than close friendship or marital ties. In brief, the family can be regarded not merely as a socio-productive unit, but indeed as a “religious” one. This religious function found its

expression through sacrificial rites and celebratory banquets, involving all members of the greater blood community, even if physically separated from the ancestral soil. Competing religious traditions emphasising the individual hence faced a grave handicap: The ideal of celibate monasticism in Buddhism and Christianity would be seen as a menace to the physical continuation of the community and the sanctity of the ancestral line.<sup>4</sup> For a successful inculturation of Christianity into rural China, Christian doctrine had to be reconciled with two fundamental principles: Respect for the common ancestor (“filiality” *xiao* 孝) and the importance of the family network for the perpetuation of social and religious traditions.

## **2. State-sanctioned orthodoxy and “heresy”**

### **a) *Protecting the orthodox***

The legal codes of the Ming and Qing reflected the Confucian foundations of Chinese civilisation. In the context of “heretical” religious movements, in particular the “Great Qing Codex” (*Daqing lüli* 大清律例) and its appendix on criminal legal case studies (*Xing'an lüli* 刑案律例) provided a basis for official action.<sup>5</sup> The “Imperial Instructions” or *Shengxun* 聖訓 contain the decrees of all enthroned rulers of the Qing dynasty. Cases referring to anti-heresy campaigns are collected

---

<sup>3</sup> 中庸 第 18 章 From the *Zhongyong* 中庸 (*Golden Mean*), chapter 18, quoted in Hou Jie and Fan Lizhu, *Zhongguo minzhong zongjiao yishi*, p. 25.

<sup>4</sup> The commitment to withdraw from the world (*chujia* 出家) and to give up the desire for family and children was in general regarded as a monstrous lack of filial piety. Note, as an extreme instance, a source from the *Waijidang* 外紀堂, dated DG 3/12/22, i.e. 22 January 1824 and quoted in Susan Naquin, “Transmission of White Lotus Sectarianism”, p. 261, note 12, indicating one instance of several male Buddhists undergoing voluntary castration in order to be able to keep their vows of chastity.

<sup>5</sup> In between “orthodoxy” and “heresy”, the Confucian state granted a borderline status to sectarian movements which partially fulfilled the criteria for orthodoxy. Examples illustrating this distinction are analysed throughout Part Three. The present chapter will provide the philosophical and legal justifications for action against “heresy” exclusively. A systematic introduction to state-approved religious activity is presented in Edward L. Farmer, “Social Regulations of the First Ming Emperor:

under the category “Suppression of Treachery and Evil” (“Jing jian-gui” 靖難規), with frequent cross-references to the relevant legislation.<sup>6</sup> Occasional pronouncements by the imperial throne on specific cases of heresy increased the relevance of such anti-heretical legislation.<sup>7</sup> Precise definitions of the morally “correct”, *zheng* 正, however, remained rare, and depended on the intellectual environment of the period.<sup>8</sup> The essential message of classical Confucianism, however, remained identical in all traditions: Universal harmony, reflected in a correct social order, the basic principles of which were defined by the “natural” hierarchies between the individual components of family and state.<sup>9</sup> The key to any interpretation was firmly held by the literati elite,

---

Orthodoxy as a Function of Authority”, in: Liu Kwang-Ching (ed.), *Orthodoxy in Late Imperial China*, Berkeley: University of California Press 1990, pp. 103-125.

<sup>6</sup> De Groot’s “Suppression of Refractory People”. Cf. J. J. M. de Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution*, pp. 263-268.

<sup>7</sup> For instance on the occasion of the persecution of White Lotus followers around the year 1800, when the Jiaqing emperor referred to an earlier adhortation by his predecessor: “Reverently we have found in the Authentic Register of Decrees of the sixth year of the Khien lung period (1741), that then an imperial edict was received, to the effect that, for the ruling of regions where as yet no rebellion against the Government has arisen, and for the protection of a realm where the Government is not yet in danger, it is necessary to make the manners and customs and the human mind the first and chief objects of care. For where the human mind is orthodox (ching [*zheng* 正]) there the manners and customs are pure, and as a consequence the Imperial Government possesses integrity and wisdom, in consequence of which a long existence is ensured to the dynasty. This sage verdict, so glorious and brilliant, truly is a political standard rule for myriads of generations.” (政教為治之標準，則人心正而風俗淳，人心正而風俗淳，則朝廷有清明之德，朝廷有清明之德，則天下有長治之效。此聖訓之靈，所以為萬世之師也。As translated by de Groot; see his *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution*, p. 369).

<sup>8</sup> The tendency among Qing officials to glorify the Han period as a time preceding the “corrupting influence” of Buddhism is exemplified in the comprehensive compilation of all known printed material, the *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書, commissioned by the Qianlong emperor. The compilation reproduced a total of 10,230 titles in 79,582 *juan*, but only 144 titles can be attributed to Daoist and a mere 25 to Buddhist authors, who appear to have been included chiefly for their historical descriptions, and not for any religious contributions. The Buddhist canon having been published with imperial authorisation no less than four times in the major languages of the Qing empire, i.e. Chinese, Tibetan, Mongol and Manchu, this figure must be regarded as being far from complete. I owe this observation to Professor T. Barrett. The privately printed Jingshan canon, a collection of printing blocks begun in the sixteenth century and continued into the deluge of the Taiping wars, combined the printing of classical sutras with that of contemporary Buddhist texts, and thus guaranteed an abundant circulation of Buddhist writings in Qing society. See T. H. Barrett, “Ignorance and the Technology of Information”, p. 26.

<sup>9</sup> The importance of an ordered relationship between human beings is underlined by the constant emphasis in the early Confucian writings on the “bonds” between family members (the “Three Bonds” *san gang* 三綱) and within society in general (the “Five Relationships” *wu lun* 五倫). The cardinal virtues of “human kindness” (*ren* 仁) and “social responsibility” (*yi* 義) express a similar duality.

who would have devoted the better part of their lives to memorising and analysing the Confucian classics, as well as the recognised exegetical writings. During the Ming-Qing continuum, the interpretations of the Song School (*songxue* 宋學, represented by the Song dynasty scholars Cheng Yi, Cheng Hao and Zhu Xi) were largely accepted as the yardstick for any debate involving matters of orthodoxy.<sup>10</sup> Phenomena which did not fulfil the criteria of Confucian orthodoxy were either tolerated as “heterodox” (*yi* 異) or condemned as “heretical” (*xie* 邪).<sup>11</sup> On a more political plane, the prosecuting officials also differentiated between “ordinary” (i.e. passive) sectarians and activists who facilitated the illegal propagation of their faith, harboured missionaries, organised local congregations or were involved in the production of religious objects or scriptures.<sup>12</sup> If evidence suggested the presence of libidinous excesses or other “unethical” behaviour, stronger terms were used, such as “licentious” (*yin* 淫) or “perturbed” (*hun* 昏). Most religious systems with a strong transcendental component - such as Daoist and Buddhist movements - clearly escaped the narrow definition of “orthodoxy” (*zheng* 正), though the tenacity of such beliefs

---

<sup>10</sup> See Erik Zürcher, “Confucian and Christian Philosophy in Late Ming China”, pp. 1-3. The *Xing'an huilan* has a paragraph on “Perverted Religions and Magical Arts”. See Derk Bodde and Clarence Morris, *Law in Imperial China - Exemplified in 190 Ch'ing Dynasty Cases translated from the Hsing-an hui-lan, with Historical, Social and Juridical Commentaries*, Cambridge / Massachusetts 1967, as well as T'ung-tsu Ch'ü, *Law and Society in Traditional China*, Paris and The Hague: 1961, pp. 201-225.

<sup>11</sup> The precise delineations between such definitions are, indubitably, to a certain degree arbitrary and dependent on the contemporary normative environment of the research community. Without wanting to overstate the obvious, it is helpful to remember that abstract definitions usually only take on a concrete meaning when seen in an empirical (i.e. social, geographical, economic, political) context. For a recent discussion of the relevant terminology, see Hubert Seiwert, “Orthodoxie und Heterodoxie im lokalen Kontext Südkinas”, in: Hans G. Kippenberg and Brigitte Luchesi (eds), *Lokale Religionsgeschichte*, Marburg: Diagonal Verlag 1995, pp. 145-155.

<sup>12</sup> Ma Zhao, in “Shilun Qianlong shiqi (1736-1796) chajin tianzhujiao shijian”, pp. 41-42, distinguishes two types of “ordinary followers” (*putong jiaotu* 普通教徒): those following the religion of their ancestors and those who convert light-heartedly. Ma reiterates a memorial annotated by the emperor (*Gongzhong zhupi zouzhe* 宮中摺本奏摺, volume 294, no. 1) stating that if “a commoner enters a faith erroneously, the duration of [the sectarian’s] affiliation would not be taken into consideration. The sectarian, provided [s]he confessed the trespasses voluntarily, would subsequently not have to be interrogated”



individual predilections of the worshippers.<sup>15</sup> Any accusation of competing with the privileged position of the Confucius cult was perceived as a direct attack against established patterns of orthodoxy. It is hence easy to comprehend the alarm which Matteo Ripa felt when he witnessed the rumours circulating through Shandong - the birth province of the philosopher - that the “Christians wanted to eliminate Confucianism” (*zhujiao yao mie rujiao* 基督教要滅儒教).<sup>16</sup> While most popular religious movements could, to a certain extent, be regarded as “competitors”, the Christianity propagated by the Jesuits was aimed at the literati, the defenders of the Confucian tradition. The policy of the Chinese state towards established expressions of Buddhism and Daoism, however, remained largely unchallenged during the whole of the later imperial period. Mainstream Buddhism indeed developed a symbiosis with the state structures which influenced its own clerical organisation. While the construction of Buddhist temples was often encouraged by local officialdom, commentaries in local gazetteers often eulogised popular shrines as a positive contribution to the cultural fabric of local society.<sup>17</sup> In the gazetteer of the Yongzheng years for the magistrature of Ningbo we are informed that “Buddhist teachings have permeated the county to such an extent that even the poorest localities have fine buildings for Buddhist monasteries, often through the financial support of the imperial

---

<sup>14</sup> Zürcher refers to the funeral of Yang Tingyun’s father. For the event, all customs which could be construed as “superstitious” were banished, until only Confucian ancestor rites prevailed. See Erik Zürcher, “Confucian and Christian Philosophy”, p. 12.

<sup>15</sup> This is true at least for the first two centuries of Qing rule. As argued by Lionel Jensen, the Confucius cult took on the role of China’s “national religion” during the latter part of the nineteenth century. While aiming to strengthen social cohesion through the creation of a national cult, intellectuals during the Qing/republican transition period (e.g. Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao or Hu Shi) emulated earlier interpretations of the Jesuits, who regarded its venerated founder as a secular philosopher. The reformers nevertheless encouraged the introduction of the religious paradigms akin to those of Christianity. Cf. Lionel M. Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism*, pp. 53-57.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. the letter by Carlo da Castorano to Matteo Ripa in Michele Fatica (ed.), *Matteo Ripa, Giornale (1705-1724), Vol. II (1711-1716)*, pp. 358-359.

<sup>17</sup> For the “bureaucratisation” of (approved) religious life, see Ya and Wang, *Zhongguo wushenlun shi*, pp. 561-565.

treasury.”<sup>18</sup> The Yongzheng survey of the Lingshan district in Shandong lists thirteen different categories of venerable locations, ranging from Confucian shrines and altars for local worthies, as well as their places of study and leisure, illustrating the great importance attached to religious rituals in local life.<sup>19</sup> All such locations bore the seal of approval of the literati elite, and can thus be regarded as fully “orthodox”.

One of the rituals which did find the approval of the official gazetteers was the ancient tilling of the “tributary fields”, the *jitian* 井田. The rite had received a fresh impetus under the early Qing emperors - already remarkable in itself, as the ruling Manchurians were more accustomed to life on horseback than behind ox and plough. In order to display respect for the hardship of the peasantry and for the benevolence of Heaven, the emperor would be ploughing the greatest amount (“1000 *mu*”), while instructing the imperial nobility and district officials to follow his example by tilling lesser plots:

The State regards the people as its basic value, the common people regard nourishment as celestial bliss; in order to unite the rulers and the ruled, the

---

<sup>18</sup> *Zhongguo difangzhi jicheng*, vol. 30 (Zhejiang gazetteers): “Ningbo Fu in the Yongzheng Period”, section ‘Buddhist and Daoist temples’ 佛道廟宇, p. 931. The original text: 井田之制，古者聖王之所由以治天下者也。自三代而下，雖有井田之名，而其實久廢。我朝定鼎，高宗純皇帝親耕耤田，以勸農桑。世宗憲皇帝亦親耕耤田，以重農本。乾隆皇帝御製耤田歌，其詞曰：‘耤田之制，聖王之所由以治天下者也。’此其大略也。井田之制，古者聖王之所由以治天下者也。自三代而下，雖有井田之名，而其實久廢。我朝定鼎，高宗純皇帝親耕耤田，以勸農桑。世宗憲皇帝亦親耕耤田，以重農本。乾隆皇帝御製耤田歌，其詞曰：‘耤田之制，聖王之所由以治天下者也。’此其大略也。

<sup>19</sup> See *Ribencang zhongguo hanjian difangzhi conggan* 日本漢籍地方志叢刊 (“A collection of rare Chinese local gazetteers from Japanese holdings”), Beijing: *Shumu wenxian chubanshe* 書目文獻出版社 1991, volume 82, *juan* 5: “Lingshan *xian* during the Yongzheng reign”, section ‘Rites and Erudition’ 禮學. Such sites include temples (*tan* 壇), palaces of erudition (*xuegong* 學宮), pavilions dedicated to Confucius (*zhisheng dian* 致聖殿), shrines for famous officials (*minghuan ci* 明宦祠) and those for the veneration of Confucian worthies (*chongsheng ci* 崇聖祠, *xiangjian ci* 向賢祠), halls of ritual and music (*li-yue tang* 禮樂堂), conventions dedicated to archery (*shetuan* 射團), regarded as a virtuous activity for sharpening the minds and toning the physical strength of young scholars, places of learning, agrarian land whose rents support education (so-called “study fields”, *xuetian* 學田), as well as shrines and temples (*ci miao*). For a study of the (Confucian) state cult, based on the *Daqing huidian* 大清會典, see Stephan Feuchtwang, “School-Temple and City God”, p. 581 ff.





superstitious beliefs.<sup>23</sup> Local gazetteers can thus be a valuable “barometer” for measuring the degree of orthodoxy allotted to a religious cult. Constituent components of late imperial religious life that went unreported in this type of source must hence be taken as an indicator of their perception as heterodox, or even “heretical” teachings. This applies also in the case of Christianity, which went virtually unmentioned in Qing gazetteers.<sup>24</sup>

b) *Weeding out “heresy”*

The legal codex of the Qing classified movements deemed to be inimical to the natural, Confucian order as “heretical” (*xie* 邪), and their perpetrators were set on a par with common criminals. The task of reporting and of eradicating signs of heresy at village level was assigned to the district magistrate.<sup>25</sup> A brief look at a local persecution against suspected “sectarians” reveals the standard procedure of dealing with sectarian insubordination: Having summoned the leaders of a group of (nominal) converts of White Lotus background, the magistrate “listened, watched and read out” (the legal statutes)<sup>26</sup> and made his enquiries concerning the whereabouts of the

---

<sup>23</sup> For instance in the gazetteer of 1686 for the Shunqing magistrature 順慶府志 in Sichuan Province, with its reference to “the simple-minded people with their respect for wooden idols”. Cf. *Zhongguo difangzhi jicheng*, vol. 54 (Sichuan gazetteers): “Kangxi shunqing fuzhi 順慶府志” (“Shunqing Prefecture in the Kangxi Period”), section: ‘Si-si 祠祀’ (‘Shrines and Sacrifices’), p. 445. These adhortations seem in many ways reminiscent of the official policy in rural districts of the People’s Republic of China after 1980.

<sup>24</sup> For this thesis, the gazetteers for the best known centres of Christianity in northern and central China were examined. The search results clearly indicated that Christian places of worship went unmentioned - alongside those of the other “heretical” movements.

<sup>25</sup> The *Fu-hui quanshu* contains a - brief - section dedicated to “Banning Heterodox Religious Sects”. The instructions in the manual can be regarded as representative, since the author uses the standard terminology employed by the prosecuting officials of the eighteenth century. See Huang Liuhong, *A Complete Book Concerning Happiness and Benevolence*, juan 26, pp. 552-553 as well as John R. Watt, *The District Magistrate in Late Imperial China*, New York and London: Columbia University Press 1972, pp. 185-196 (on *baojia* 保甲 and *xiangyue* 鄉約 as policies of rural surveillance).

<sup>26</sup> “*El chi-cheu oyò, vio y leyò*”, see the letter by M. F. Oliver to Kilian Stumpf (2 May 1718), reprinted in *Sinica Franciscana* VIII, p. 960. A typology of official action from the local official to the highest

sectarians. Rather typically of late imperial justice, the magistrate expected the missionaries as leaders and supreme elders of their congregation to deal themselves with the criminal elements. Only when the missionaries insisted that they lacked the manpower and punitive measures to keep the offenders from escaping, the sub-prefect acted, by sending a dozen men who examined all suspects individually, using the standard means of extracting the truth.<sup>27</sup> Having concluded the interrogation, the magistrate informed his superiors in the capital of Dongchangfu prefecture, where three days later the chief judge for the province, the *an-chasi* 按察使, became active. After all of the accused sectarians had been judged by the relevant minor officials from their respective localities, the chief provincial judge heard the confessions, most of which poured scorn over the Christian church and the missionaries. That the state had not been inattentive became obvious when the magistrates responsible for the case revealed a list comprising thousands of names compiled by the sectarian leader Yang Dele, self-proclaimed “king” of his movement.<sup>28</sup> The same document also contains evidence about two sectarians from neighbouring districts, who had sought the missionaries' protection. State officials often skilfully exploited popular apprehensions against “heretical movements”, relying in particular on the support of local heads and community leaders.<sup>29</sup>

---

echelons of the state administration can be found in Ch'ü T'ung-tsu, *Local Government in China under the Ch'ing*, Stanford University Press 1969, pp. 1-6. See also Susan Naquin, *Millenarian Rebellion in China: The Eight Trigrams Uprising of 1813*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press 1976, pp. 122-126.

<sup>27</sup> ... *algunos tormentos y èui pa zu* [□□□□□ i.e. blows in the face]. See the letter by M. F. Oliver to K. Stumpf (2 May 1718), in *Sinica Franciscana* VIII, p. 963.

<sup>28</sup> See *ibidem*, pp. 966-968. The case of Yang Dele is already referred to on page 111 ff. of this thesis.

<sup>29</sup> In the case of the Xinglijiao affair of 1718, magistrates even relied on the information provided by the leaders of the local Christian community. See *ibidem*, p. 968. In so doing, they followed the recommended procedure for uncovering seditious movements in rural districts. See Huang Liuhong, *A Complete Book Concerning Happiness and Benevolence*, p. 553.

Already the imperial motto - *qing* 清 implied the “purification” of the empire from the corruption of their predecessors: Embezzlement, excessive influence of the court eunuchs, libertarian attitudes in the arts and in the scholarly circles prevalent in China’s most developed regions.<sup>30</sup> Though cautious not to antagonise the Chinese scholar-elite, linchpin of the imperial administration, Kangxi, the most illustrious of the early Qing emperors, was adamant in his attempt to strengthen the moral fibre of society.<sup>31</sup> The Yongzheng emperor continued his quest to reinstate the authority of the empire, mainly by investing into the local infrastructure (dykes, bridges and the irrigation system) and through the provision of famine relief systems (public granaries).<sup>32</sup> A rapidly expanding population implied that the imperial administration became increasingly stretched.<sup>33</sup> In practical terms, the state relied on the co-operation of the local elites for the up-keep of law and order in the countryside. The latter had to count on the co-operation of the kinship organisations, the guilds and the village elders when it came to policing the countryside against bandit activity, sporadic popular violence and subversive tendencies within the rural population. This also meant that any popular religious movement, as well as the missionaries of the Christian religion, had to acknowledge the importance of the Confucian gentry,

---

<sup>30</sup> The early Qing emperors’ dislike of the mores in China’s most flourishing region, the lower Yangtse Delta (or *Jiangnan* 江南), is illustrated in Philip A. Kuhn, *Soulstealers*, pp. 71-72.

<sup>31</sup> Most notably in the “Sacred Edict” of 1705, in particular in Commandment 7: “Expel heresy by embracing the study of the morally correct” (□□□□□□□□□□□□□□). For the “Sacred Edict of the Kang-Hsi Emperor”, see Hugh D. R. Baker, *Chinese Family and Kinship*, Appendix 1, p. 218.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Chow Kai-wing, *The Rise of Confucian Ritualism*, pp. 122-130 and 152-153. Also Feng Erkang 方慶康, *Yongzheng zhuan* 雍正傳 (“Biography of the Yongzheng Emperor”), Beijing: Beijing People’s Press 北京人民出版社 1993 (1985).

<sup>33</sup> During the eighteenth century, the administrative structure for the whole empire stagnated at around thirteen hundred local administrative units, while the overall population nearly trebled in size. This expansion, however, can also be explained as a reaction to the depletions of the Manchurian conquest and the Three Feudatories warfare. See G. W. Skinner and M. Elvin, *The City in Late Imperial China*, pp. 17-21. For a detailed case study on Sichuan, see the doctoral dissertation by Robert E. Entenmann, “Migration and Settlement in Sichuan, 1644-1796”, PhD thesis: Harvard University 1982. A summary with reference to Sichuan can also be found in P.-T. Ho, *Studies on the Population of China*, pp. 139-

ultimately aiming to attract them to their cause. The structural and numerical weakness of the state in the countryside was exacerbated by the latent tendency towards corruption, a phenomenon which often provided the last escape route for persecuted sectarians.<sup>34</sup>

Whatever its actual strength in the country, the state demanded the right to influence the ideological culture of its subjects. The well-being of the state was directly linked to the moral soundness of the people. State officials were expected to extirpate expressions of misguided beliefs in order to safeguard stability within the empire.<sup>35</sup> The official hence saw himself as the extension of the emperor's "mother-and-father" (*fu-mu* 父 母) function for the common people. Just as the omnipotent *paterfamilias* had to punish disobedience in order to guarantee discipline for the common good, the imperial official had to "protect" the innocent subject from heretical and seditious ideas, which included the pursuit of superstitious practices, as well as adherence to millenarian movements. Imperial laws stipulated the cangue, hard labour and exile to the non-Han regions of the remote north and west as routine punishment for "illegal sectarians" refusing to mend their ways.<sup>36</sup> Though generally accepted as part of China's "orthodox" traditions, even Buddhism was by the middle

---

143. For China in general, see Pierre-Étienne Will, *Bureaucratie et famine au dixhuitième siècle*, Paris: Mouton 1980, pp. 47-55.

<sup>34</sup> As highlighted in the despairing memorial by censor Yi Zhongqing 伊 中 清 of 8 December 1835, detailing the collusion between suspected sectarians, state officials and soldiers. See de Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution*, p. 519.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Chow Kai-wing, *The Rise of Confucian Ritualism*, pp. 57, 70-71. See also Mizoguchi Yuuzoo 三 浦 洋 蔵 (translated into Chinese by Wu Qilai 吴 启 来), "Ming-Qing shiqi de renxinglun" 明清时期的人性论 ("Discourses on the Human Character during the Ming and the Qing"), in Liu Junwen 刘 俊 文 and Xu Yang 徐 阳 *Riben xuezhe yanjiu zhongguoshi lunshu xuanyi* 日本学者研究中国史论著选译 ("Selected Translations of Sinological Contributions by Japanese Academics"), Beijing: *Zhonghua shuju* 中 华 书 局 1993, volume 7: *Sixiang zongjiao* 思想宗教学 ("Philosophy and Religion"), pp. 162-167 and 171-175.

<sup>36</sup> The case of the Christian Li Chaoxuan 李 超 玄, retold in the *Shengxun*, volume 102, forcefully illustrates the determination of the Qing to root out the public profession of Christianity less than one generation before the Unequal Treaties changed the position of Christianity permanently. The *Shengxun*

of the Qing period regarded by many intellectuals as a dubious philosophy. If mainstream Buddhism was regarded as incompatible with the practical tasks of statecraft, Christianity's preoccupation with the supernatural rendered it beyond the pale of the acceptable - as much as the court missionaries would want to stress its "rational" nature. But as long as the foreign teachings were confined to the members of the intellectual elite, little immediate harm was to be feared. During the eighteenth century, however, the Qing empire had to face up to the threat of insurrections on a massive scale, rooted in the millenarian traditions of Buddhism. Though Buddhist millenarianism expressed itself through a panoply of sectarian movements, officials during the Ming and Qing dynasties used the collective appellation of the "White Lotus" (*bailianjiao* 白蓮教) in order to designate "sectarian criminals" (*jiaofan* 邪教).<sup>37</sup> The following chapter will analyse how the fixation of state action against "heresy" led to increased pressure on China's Christian communities during the eighteenth century. It will also illustrate the gradual shift of emphasis away from

---

decree of 7 January 1819 can be found in de Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution*, pp. 484-485.

<sup>37</sup> The term *jiaofan* 邪教 literally means "criminals of [religious] teaching". The most well-known such "criminals" were the White Lotus 白蓮教, Yuanjiao 元教, Tiandihui 天地下會 and Luojujiao 羅教 - all derivatives of the Pure Land branch of Buddhism 淨土教, which sought salvation through whole-hearted recitation and meditation. Of Chan 禪 only two branches survived (*Lin ji* 臨濟 and *Cao dong* 曹洞) with only marginal appeal to the wider population, though popular lore links the Triads to the Shaolin monastery, and therefore to Chan Buddhism. See Ya and Wang, *Zhongguo wushenlun shi*, pp. 562-563, as well as Barend ter Haar, *Ritual and Mythology of the Chinese Triads*, pp. 281-283 (and *passim*).

specifically “anti-Christian” persecutions towards legal action aimed at “heretical” mass movements in general.

## **Chapter 7: Christianity as the target - A chronology of state action**

The preceding chapter analysed the philosophical and legal foundations for police operations against movements regarded as “heretical”. We arrived at the conclusion that the borderline between prohibited heresy and tolerated heterodoxy was determined by the central government and by local magistrates according to subjective criteria (religious inclination, ethnic and social factors), as well as political ones (pressure caused by “sectarian” insurrections, rivalries inside the imperial clan).<sup>1</sup> During times of tranquillity, popular religious movements would normally enjoy the benign neglect of the state officials, whereas the state would apply intense pressure whenever its authority appeared threatened. The following chapter will analyse the consequences of such subjective and political factors for the relationship between the imperial government and the Christian communities within the Qing empire. Another function of the chapter is to trace the development of the “Chinese church” in the northern and central provinces of Han China. It is intended to provide a chronological framework for the following three chapters, and should hence be read in conjunction with these. For the present chapter, we will begin with the “initial event”- the imperial edict of 1724, banning all missionary activity outside the capital and Macau.

---

<sup>1</sup> In the words of Richard Smith: “When dissent became disloyalty, ‘heterodoxy’ became ‘heresy’”. See Richard J. Smith, “Ritual in Ch’ing Culture”, in: Liu Kwang-Ching (ed.), *Orthodoxy in Late Imperial China*, p. 304.

### **1. *The Yongzheng Edict of 1724***

Against the background of the violent suppression of the Three Feudatories and the pacification of the outer margins of their empire, the Qing government had become accustomed to violent subversion within its borders and therefore perceived any unauthorised gatherings as subversion against the state. After decades of toleration, guaranteed by the imperial decree of 1692, China's Christian communities now began to feel the consequences of the state's suspicion. Moreover, the relatively harmonious relationship between the Jesuits at the imperial court and the Kangxi emperor began to suffer under the strain of the Rites Controversy. Irritated by the papal interference into the religious affairs of his own empire - including the lives of his trusted Jesuit servants - the Kangxi emperor enforced a licence system (the so-called *piao* 票) in December 1706, followed by a ban on proselytisation and on the construction of new churches in May 1717. The atmosphere deteriorated even further after the accession to the throne of the Yongzheng 雍正 emperor in 1723. Stating that foreigners created disorder in the empire by introducing a deity superior to Heaven - the origin of the ruling dynasty's claim to legitimacy - the governor for Fujian, Zhang Boxing 張 boxed (1652-1725), submitted a petition requesting that all foreign missionaries be expelled, the Christian communities dispersed, and their churches converted into educational institutions.<sup>2</sup> The governor was anything but a friend of Christianity - and of the foreigners who imported the creed into his province. His rationale was simple: Punitive measures were necessary to "rectify the minds of the people, confused and dumbfounded by the foreign teaching, and to provide for a morally healthy environment". Uncontrollable elements had infiltrated his province,

---

<sup>2</sup> A general account of the increasing pressure on the Christian missions during two first decades of the eighteenth century can be found in B. Willeke, *Imperial Government*, pp. 9-18.

taken advantage of the ignorance and innocence of his subjects and spread beyond control.<sup>3</sup>

Though undoubtedly fired by a dislike of the Western religion, the petition owed as much to the fratricidal politics of the Yongzheng emperor as to the hatred between the Jesuits and their enemies in Europe. Following the ascent of anti-missionary officials at Yongzheng's court, and the arrest of a pro-Jesuit in charge of missionary affairs and papal legations (Bursai, Chinese name Zhao Chang 趙昌) in the first quarter of 1723, the senior official Zhang Pengge submitted three memorials requesting the prohibition of Christianity in China, and the expulsion of all foreign missionaries, except from Beijing "where they could be useful". This request was repeated at the beginning of 1724 by the Manchurian nobleman and governor general of Fujian and Zhejiang, Gioro Manbao 高爾曼保 or 高爾保. The memorial, together with a similar proposal by the Board of Rites in November 1723, was endorsed by the Yongzheng emperor in an edict of 10 January 1724. The edict was followed by three more (18 November 1725, 18 August 1732 and 21 August 1732), authorising general persecutions against Christianity in the empire. It would be simplistic to analyse these persecutions as mere expressions of personalised hatred against Christianity - it was rather a case of the emperor's wrath against the Christian Sunu clan translating into state policy.<sup>4</sup> The rapid fall from grace of the Sunu clan is

---

<sup>3</sup> Listed in a letter by Domenico Perroni of 1723, with a subsection entitled: *Editto del Mandarino Zumtu e Vicere di Fo-kien contro la religione christiana*. The passage is quoted in Chinese: 高爾保奏請禁教疏. Cf. APF document SOCP, *Indie Orientali*, 1723-1725, folium 147. The letter itself is part of the *Continuazione delle Memorie della Cina*, which refers to the martyrdom of Francisco Buccheretti and Giovanni Batista Messari, among other missionary novices.

<sup>4</sup> An edicts from the early years of the Yongzheng emperor's rule, reprinted in Wang Zhichun, *Qingchao rouyuan ji*, pp. 64-66, casts an interesting light on the discerning religious spirit of the young emperor. The edict of YZ 5/4, i.e. May/June 1727, entitled "Declaring the similarities and differences between Buddhism, Daoism and Christianity" (宣諭佛道與天主教異同諭旨), is on a whole condemnatory of Christianity, and makes direct reference to the Sunu affair. Already in his second year on the throne (YZ 2/9, i.e. Oct./Nov. 1724), the Yongzheng emperor had declined to condemn the



well documented, both through the surviving court records and in the relations of the court missionaries. Sunu 孙毓汶 (1648-1725) and the heir-pretenders Acina (Yinsi 胤思 1681-1726) and Seshe (Yintang 胤禔 1683-1726) were members of the imperial family who had embraced Christianity during the Kangxi period - the family surrounding the direct descendent of Nurhaci and keeper of the Imperial Genealogies (the *yu die* 玉牒).<sup>5</sup> This politically motivated persecution soon involved the entire offspring of Sunu, with “deviations from the Manchurian Way” (*buzun manzhou zhengdao* 不遵满洲正道) given as the official reason.<sup>6</sup> As a general background to this turmoil we would recall that the Qing empire was still struggling to quell rebellions threatening the legitimacy of the Manchurian overlords, such as the 1707 Yinian 胤禩 rebellion, the chaos caused by Zhang Yunru 张允儒 in 1724, and the continuous uprisings in Taiwan.<sup>7</sup> The very same year saw the promulgation of a series of laws aimed at countering the spread of “heretical teachings” (*xiejiao* 邪教) originating from all major religious traditions of the Qing empire. These adverse conditions help explain why, throughout the brief but eventful Yongzheng period, Christianity had been publicly marked as a subversive, “heretical”

---

practice of Islam in Shandong province. See Wang Zhichun, *Qingchao rouyuan ji*, p. 59. For more information on the intrigues surrounding Yongzheng's accession to power, see Feng Erkang, *Yongzheng zhuan*, pp. 75-139.

<sup>5</sup> See the paper by Eugenio Menegón, “Surniama Tragoedia: Religion and Political Martyrdom in the Yongzheng Period”, presented at the *Symposium on the History of Christianity in China*, Hong Kong 2-4 October 1996. Even two hundred years after the event, the legal proceedings against members of the Sunu clan were regarded as sufficiently important to use them as the opening documents to be reprinted in *Wenxian congbian*. Such harsh punishments was of questionable success, especially in the light of the case against two great-grandchildren of the Sunu family in 1814. Demotion and physical punishment were insufficient deterrents against the will of the family to preserve their Christian traditions. See also F. Margiotti, *Il cattolicesimo nello Shansi*, pp. 190-191.

<sup>6</sup> Wang Zhichun, *Qingchao rouyuan ji*, p. 64, contains an edict concerning the trial of Sunu's son Wuerchen 鄂爾陳.

<sup>7</sup> For a more detailed picture of the insurrections during the early Qing period, see Zhou Yumin 周玉敏 and Shao Yong 邵雍 *Zhongguo huibang shi* 中国回帮史 “History of China's Brotherhoods and Societies”, Shanghai: *Shanghai renmin chubanshe* 上海人民出版社 1993, chapter one. The rebellions on Taiwan flared up once again towards the end of the eighteenth century, influenced by the Heaven and Earth Society (Tiandihui 天地会). The importance the Qing attached

creed, aiming to undermine the stability of the empire through involvement in court affairs.<sup>8</sup>

To the remaining missionaries, such as Carolus a Castorano, the new policy was an impediment: Provincial churches had to be abandoned for the safety of the capital, buildings belonging to missionaries were confiscated, and the remaining foreign pastors had to propagate their faith under cover of the night.<sup>9</sup> To local Christian communities, the consequences were often disastrous, forcing their leaders underground in times of official investigation. To state officials the mere rumour of belonging to a “heretical sect” was sufficient proof that Christians disturbed the local peace and deserved to be punished. Village elders and members of the rural elite (*shenshi* 紳士) were urged to report suspicious communities wherever they could be detected. Religious proselytisation was thus politicised, missionaries branded as traitors.<sup>10</sup> Thus we learn of an incident in the country town Guan xian (“*Kuon hien*”) in Shandong Province, in the late Kangxi year of 1714, where officials and ordinary villagers colluded against local Christians.<sup>11</sup> Persecutions were often local in character, and often failed to reach the attention of the imperial administration, since

---

to a merciless policy towards rebels of all persuasions is vividly illustrated in de Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution*, pp. 340-349.

<sup>8</sup> This is also the conclusion of J. J. M. de Groot. See his *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution*, pp. 273/274.

<sup>9</sup> The observations are based on the diary of the Roman missionary for the years 1698-1724. The document is preserved in the Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana as document Lat. Vat. 12849, entitled *Brevis narratio itineris ex Italia usq. ad Chinam...* It contains (next to a detailed baptismal record of Chinese Christians) an account of individual persecutions against Christian villagers and missionaries during this period, in particular of the official action against Christianity of 1714 in the Shandong localities of Linqing (“*Lin-zing*”) and Wucheng (“*Vu Cing*”).

<sup>10</sup> Such as in the case of the (Chinese) missionary Cai Zu 蔡祖, arrested in Fujian province in YZ 11/12 (January 1734). ‘Traitor’ (*jianmin* 奸民) Cai Zu was found in the company of two Portuguese nationals and several books (including a volume entitled “Christian paintings and statues”, (*tianzhujiao tuxiang* 天主教圖像)). While the foreigners were evicted from the empire via Xiamen (Fujian province), Cai Zu was executed through strangulation. See Wang Zhichun, *Qingchao rouyuan ji*, p. 86.

<sup>11</sup> The characters of the name have yet to be identified. Recorded in the B.A.V. document Lat. Vat. 12849, folia 172, 175-176: *Gentiles iterum accusavunt Xtianos quod essent sectarii; sic Mandarinus predictus accusationem accepit et captura fieri iussit* (“The gentiles accused the Christians of being sectarians; the mentioned official agreed with the accusation and ordered their arrest”).

undue candour could have negative repercussions for the career of the district magistrate concerned. The diary of Matteo Ripa contains an interesting report relating to the persecutions of 1714. The prefect (*zhifu* 知府) instructed his 72 local constables (*difang* 地方) to retain the spread of Christianity as their personal secret. In return, he promised that they would be entitled to partake in the distribution of bribes collected from Christians who wanted to escape harsher treatment. The secretive nature of the official action could not be carried out without the support of anti-Christian (or at least sceptical) commoners, who were urged to report any cultic activities which violated the traditional communal rites.<sup>12</sup> The remaining foreign missionaries thus had to struggle against the ever-increasing official pressure and against the suspicions harboured by the local communities.<sup>13</sup>

The persecutions of the late Kangxi and of the Yongzheng were *local* in character, rather than encompassing whole regions. They were concentrated in those provinces, in particular Fujian province, where magistrates and circuit officials had already been criticising the presence of missionaries.<sup>14</sup> The unequal pattern of state action against missionaries is reflected in the exasperated words of an unnamed Dominican, writing to Rome from Changzhou at the end of 1733: ... *quelle raison*

---

<sup>12</sup> Cf. the letter by Carlo da Castorano to Matteo Ripa in Michele Fatica (ed.), *Matteo Ripa, Giornale (1705-1724), Vol. II (1711-1716)*, pp. 344-345.

<sup>13</sup> B.A.V. document Lat. Vat. 12849, folium 175: ...*quia vero Gentiles ubique sunt nostri inimici, et quotidie dehortantur fideles ut non sequantur Sanctam Leggem* [sic] ..., *multa machinari aperunt contra Xtianos, S.tam Leggem, et europeos, que omnia retulerunt ... Mandarinini seu officiali sectarios sever punirent, exceptas tantum tres sectas veras et bonas assertas Litteratorum, Tauriorum et Bontiorum.* ("The gentiles truly are our enemies wherever we go. Every day they admonish Christians not to follow the Holy Faith ... Many schemes are being forged against Christians, and against the Europeans ... The Mandarins or officials punish sectarians severely, except for those three sects acknowledged as being truthful and good: Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism").

<sup>14</sup> The grave situation for missionaries and local Christians in the province had already been highlighted by Domenico Perroni, in the *Memorie della Cina*.. The Yongzheng memorial sent shockwaves through the missionary community, and was hastily translated for relay to Europe. Perroni's *Memorie* also contain a translation of the edict into Italian, reproduced, for instance, in his letter of 1724 to the Propaganda Fide (cf. APF SOCP, *Indie Orientali*, 1723-1725, ff. 40-42 and 125-131). The case of Fu'an (recorded in the *Zhonggong zhupi zouzhe* 中國公署奏摺, no. 5, volume 294) in Fujian

[ont] les Mandarins de Fou Kien de traiter les Missionnaires et leurs Chrétiens avec celle rigueur, lorsque les Mandarins de plusieurs provinces les laissent en paix?<sup>15</sup>

Other missionary accounts from the same region, such as the *Remarques sur la Relation de la persecution arrivée à la fin de 1733* ...<sup>16</sup> by Antonio Enigues, and similar writings by Matteo Ripa emphasising the unequal treatment of Christians and Muslims by Fujianese officials,<sup>17</sup> underline the frustration experienced by the missionaries active in the province.<sup>18</sup> While most local officials of the other provinces in the empire shared the Fujianese view, regarding missionaries and converts alike as lacking filial obedience and giving rise to trouble, reports from the late 1720s confirm that at least in the Jiangnan, Christians were maintaining healthy links with local officials. Despite the imperial edict, the magistrates of certain districts even connived with the presence of European - as well as Chinese - missionaries. But to the detriment of the China mission, frictions between the missionary orders weakened the position of the missionaries immensely - and in particular that of the Jesuit order.<sup>19</sup> The frustration was in particular felt by more senior missionaries, caused by the tendency between rival orders to outshine each other with missionary success stories.

---

province is analysed in Ma Zhao, *Shilun Qianlong shiqi (1736-1796) chajin tianzhujiao shijian*, pp. 36-37.

<sup>15</sup> See APF, SC, *Indie Orientali/Cina*, 1733-1736, ff. 2-4. Wang Zhichun, *Qingchao rouyuan ji*, p. 80, reproduces a memorial by the governor for Fujian, Liu Shiming 劉世明, requesting imperial authorisation for a general prohibition of Christianity in his province (□□□□□□□□□□□□). The memorial, of YZ 8/5 (June/July 1730) clearly went beyond the existing prohibition against Christian proselytisation.

<sup>16</sup> See APF, SC, *Indie Orientali/Cina*, 1733-1736, ff. 166-177.

<sup>17</sup> The document is entitled *Relazione della Espulsione de Missionarii della Cina*, and is filed at the APF as SC, *Indie Orientali/Cina*, 1733-1736, folium 121R.

<sup>18</sup> The negative attitude of the Fujian officials seemed still unchanged after the first twenty years of the Qianlong period were drawing to their close. See Ma Zhao, “Shilun Qianlong shiqi (1736-1796) chajin tianzhujiao shijian”, pp. 18-19 for concrete examples.

<sup>19</sup> The localities are named as Song Kiang (Songjiang, in Zhejiang near Shanghai) and Chang hay (Shanghai), both home to more than 100,000 Christians. The letter was composed by Antoine Gaubil and sent to Paris on 6 November 1726. Cf. R. Simon (ed.), *Le P. Antoine Gaubil*, pp. 128-129.

The despair felt by many was eloquently expressed by Johannes Müllener, immediately after the Yongzheng edict had been issued:

Since the edict has come into force - the missionaries arrested and the churches occupied and desecrated by the public militias - the Christians and neophytes have been chased out of the city perimeters, with hardly any money. The Certificate [of toleration], or Imperial Patent, ..., has been torn up. And with it, the arrogance and the vanity, which made us seem so great in China. It's all over and vanished with the wind.<sup>20</sup>

## **2. The Qianlong and Jiaqing reign periods (1736 - 1821)**

The first decade of the Qianlong emperor's rule are best described as an "unexpected opportunity" for the empire's struggling Christian communities. Following the harshness of the Yongzheng rule, China's Christians pinned their hopes on the figure of the incumbent Qianlong emperor. Though Hongli 弘曆 had grown up under the tutelage of the Yongzheng emperor, he did not share his personal aversion to the influence of the foreign men residing at court. The reasons for the relative leniency of the subsequent policy towards Christianity can in fact be reduced to the new emperor's fascination with Western technology and art.<sup>21</sup> The Qianlong ruler's initial anti-Buddhism and his positive attitude towards European civilisation,

---

<sup>20</sup> Free translation of the original: *Perciò si è messo in esecuzione il sudetto decreto, e li Missionarii sono scacciati, le chiese restano occupate, e profanate per il pubblico servizio: li christiani e neophiti, benche perseguitati in altri luoghi, con puochi danari, se tirano fuori de tra vagli. Il Diploma, o patente imperiale va ... per esser abbruggiato, e così l'arroganza e la vanità, questi noi ... fui cioè grandi di Cina, è finita, e svanita col fumo.* This letter by Müllener can be found in the Propaganda archives as SOCP, *Indie Orientali*, 1723-1725, ff. 188-189.

<sup>21</sup> The role of the painter Giuseppe Castiglione (Chinese name: Lang Shining 郎世宁) - whose work included depictions of the victorious Qing (*Daqing tongyi jiangyu tu* 大清同义疆域图), European landscapes and the construction of the Yuanmingyuan 圆明园 summer palace outside the capital - has been widely speculated on. The fact that Castiglione never learnt to master the Chinese language makes his reputation as the emperor's favourite court missionary even more enigmatic. It seems, however, certain that his quiet yet persistent interventions on behalf of China's Christians left an impression on the emperor, and it has even been argued that the paintings and robot toys produced for the emperor did more for the advancement of Christianity in the empire than the composition of theological tracts. See the unpublished conference paper by Alabiso Alida (Univ. *La Sapienza*, Rome)

however, dissipated quickly following the death of his personal advisor Zhu Shi (1665-1736). Despite a general amnesty, the emperor not only refused to alter his father's order, but reinforced legislation aimed at punishing Manchurian Bannermen who entertained contact with Christian missionaries. Senior state officials had awoken to the dangers of sectarian activities in the empire, and were furthermore still influenced by the repressive atmosphere of the Yongzheng years. The uprising of the Muslim population of Shaanxi in the years following his accession to the Throne exacerbated the determination of certain anti-Christian elements within the official elite to deal with the Christians effectively before they too would become a problem. The anti-Christian edicts of the years QL 11 to QL 13 (1747-49) have to be seen in this light.<sup>22</sup> This was preceded by sporadic government action, such as in the winter of 1737, when officials seized the Chinese Christian Liu Er 刘二 as he was about to baptise a dying infant in a street in Beijing. Absolving street orphans before their imminent death was one of the routine rites performed by the foreign missionaries, giving rise to allegations of perversion and superstitious practices. The arrest and subsequent trial of Liu Er gave state officials an opportunity to show their displeasure, and put the friendship between the young emperor and the court missionaries to a first test. Though the suggested death penalty could be converted to severe caning after earnest pleading by court Jesuits, the incident and the ensuing confirmation of the Yongzheng edict against missionary activity outside the capital area proved that the

---

"Castiglione and the Introduction of European Painting and Architecture in China" for the *International Symposium 'China and the World in the Eighteenth Century'*, Beijing June 1995.

<sup>22</sup> And this despite repeated reassertions from Chinese Christians and European missionaries that the two religions were not identical. See Ma Zhao, "Shilun Qianlong shiqi (1736-1796) chajin tianzhujiao shijian", pp. 30-32.

initial optimism had been premature.<sup>23</sup> With progressing age, he announced policies of increasing severity. Owing to the personal intercession of court missionaries, however, persecutions were brief and rarely resulted in direct fatalities. In contrast to the relative leniency of the emperor, the anti-Christian attitude of the scholar officials discharged itself through concerted efforts by the Board of Punishment (*xingbu* 刑部) to wipe out Christianity. The first edict which allowed local magistrates over the whole empire to suppress Christian villages was issued in 1746, triggering a wave of state action which lasted for almost two years.

In this context it is of vital interest to understand the persecutions against Christian communities as part of the wider campaign against “heretical sects” which was unfolding at the same time.<sup>24</sup> The years between 1746 and 1748 were marked by a vigorous offensive against expressions of millenarian Buddhism, such as the Mahayana and Iron Ship teachings as well as the increasingly virulent Luo cult.<sup>25</sup> These movements had proliferated in all parts of eastern China, but also in Zhili, Shaanxi and in Sichuan, causing an increasingly uncompromising attitude towards other movements which escaped the narrow definitions of orthodoxy. The propagation of Christianity in Fujian, whether by Europeans or by local converts, was hence perceived as a similarly debilitating act which deserved little mercy. The capital punishment imposed on Bishop Sanz and on four other European priests by the governor for Fujian province in September/October 1746 should in this context be interpreted as the logical extension of the contemporary anti-heresy drive. The

---

<sup>23</sup> The incident is reported in Zhang Ze 张则, *Qingdai jinjiaoqi de tianzhujiao* 清代禁教期的天主教“Catholic Christianity during the Qing Prohibition”), Taipei: Guangqi Press 广庆出版社 1992, pp. 120-121.

<sup>24</sup> This also affected the highly popular syncretic movement founded by Lin Zhaoen. Three-in-One temples were destroyed and often only survived under the disguise of Confucian academies, where the deified Lin was displayed in the manner of the Confucian sages, mimicking the statues used for the Song scholar Zhu Xi. See K. Dean, *Lord of the Three in One*, pp. 17-18.





folk or cause men and women to meet together, this must of course be stopped by rigorous means.<sup>27</sup>

For the remainder of the Qianlong period, the emperor's words would be translated into punitive action, starting with the persecutions of 1753 in Hubei, 1754 and 1759 in Fujian, in the 1760s in Sichuan, 1767 in Guangdong, 1768 in Henan and 1774 in Jiangxi province.<sup>28</sup> Foreign missionaries were expressly forbidden to go ashore, while traders had to limit their transactions to the port of Guangzhou. Nevertheless, a number of European missionaries continued to make use of the network established between Christian communities in the decades following the ban on missionary activity. Penetrating the hinterland from the safehaven of Macau, individuals from the West continued their pastoral activity. One such example is Bernardo de los Santos, OFM (1725 - ?, *alias* Guo Bornadu 郭博那度), who, in the late 1750s, joined foreign missionaries (a certain Ding Diwo 丁迪窩 and Lü Baolu 呂保路) already active in Guangdong province.<sup>29</sup> In a memorial entitled “Investigation and Capture of Western Christians” (*pan-huo xiyang tianzhujiamin* 盤獲西洋天主教民), the senior official Wu Shitian 吳世天 provided details about the itinerary and legal transgressions of Mr Guo and some of his confrères. Predictably, the mere fact of having left the enclave of Macau in the pursuit of missionary work was cited as being contrary to Qing laws. We also learn how Guo

---

<sup>27</sup> 郭博那度等呈請嚴禁天主教人等入內地傳教摺。乾隆十九年十一月。奏。奉。上。諭。著。照。所。請。嚴。禁。其。有。違。犯。者。一。律。懲。辦。欽。此。Translated by de Groot, in *ibidem*, p. 288.

<sup>28</sup> See Ma Zhao, “Shilun Qianlong shiqi (1736-1796) chajin tianzhujiào shijian”, p. 19. See also, for Sichuan, Léonide Guiot, *La Mission du Su-tchuen au XVIII<sup>me</sup> siècle*, p. 149.

<sup>29</sup> The identity of the other two individuals still needs to be ascertained; the memorial is dated 25 December 1759. See FHA, scroll 9258, original document 492, sub-number 12, frames 311-313. The case is reiterated in a memorial of 28 July 1760.

Bornadu utilised long-established connections between the European missionary orders and local Christian communities, providing a list of Christian households the culprit had been sighted in. Frequenting the country lanes connecting the Cantonese mainland with Macau, the missionary obtained and distributed “heretical scriptures” (*xieshu* 邪書). Moreover, the missionary had established connections with a local Christian who promised that he could print and distribute two hundred of these scriptures in Jiangxi province.<sup>30</sup> Afraid of the inflammatory (literally “deceptive and confounding” *pian-huo* 騙惑) effects of the unchecked proliferation of heterodox literature, the state officials decided to adopt a hostile stance against Christians who co-operated with foreign missionaries. A localised persecution of 1765 in Henan was followed by more widespread action in the imperial capital and the Hunan-Hubei region.<sup>31</sup>

After more than a decade’s respite, the Qianlong persecutions continued in five successive waves during the years 1784 and 1785. The persecutions followed the end of a military campaign against Muslim insurgents in Gansu province, and were triggered by the discovery in December 1784 of two priests in the vicinity of Xi’an.<sup>32</sup> The persecutions had their most immediate effect on the Christians of Zhili, although other provinces quickly followed suit. The governor general for Shaanxi and Gansu, Le Bao 李保, had soon acquired a reputation for zealous action against heterodox

---

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*, frame 313.

<sup>31</sup> See Zhang Ze, *Qingdai jinjiaoqi de tianzhujiao*, pp. 79-80.

<sup>32</sup> Both the campaign against the Gansu “Wahhabees” and the discovery of the Christian priests are covered in de Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution*, pp. 311- 329 and 329 - 335, respectively. The intercepted priests were Francisco Maria Magni, OFM (Nima Fangjige 尼瑪方吉格, 1723-1785) and Manuel Ma (馬馬 or Manuel Gonsalvez). Magni had been active in the China mission for twenty-three years at the time of his discovery, whereas Ma, born in 1742 of Chinese parents but adopted by Portuguese parents, had worked for 13 years in the Shaanxi mission. For these biographical details, see B. Willeke, *Imperial Government*, pp. 85-86, notes 48 and 49.

movements of any denomination.<sup>33</sup> The ensuing interrogations produced evidence of thriving Christian communities in other parts of Shanxi and Shaanxi, as well as of connections with the central-eastern provinces of Hunan, Hubei, Zhili and Shandong. The fact that a certain number of Europeans were discovered after decades of covert activity gave the state officials additional cause to pursue punitive action.<sup>34</sup> The anti-heresy drive of the 1780s culminated in a first major campaign against the Eight Trigram movement, following an uprising in Shandong province. Shandong had already gained notoriety as the origin of the Wang Lun uprising of 1774, and exerted a magnetic attraction to similar heterodox movements.<sup>35</sup>

#### a) *Persecutions in Korea*

Following the edict of 1724, the diocese of Beijing was shorn of the surrounding regions of Northern China, Mongolia and Korea which had originally been under its theoretical pastoral care when established in 1690.<sup>36</sup> Of these three regions, the Korean church in particular had acquired relevance.<sup>37</sup> Due to its geographical and political isolation, Korea had been out of bounds for the early

---

<sup>33</sup> See, for instance, de Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution*, p. 326. See also the detailed analysis in B. Willeke, *Imperial Government*, pp. 75-95.

<sup>34</sup> De Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution*, pp. 329 - 334 contains a reprint of the relevant memorial (23 December 1784), emphasising the discovery of Europeans in the Chinese heartland. The evidence produced by the provincial governor Bi Yuan 畢元, however, merely serves to stress the degree of autonomy which the indigenous Christian communities had attained, largely independent of any European help. In this context - in a memorial from the year 1805 - we will also once more encounter the Christian Simon Liu, referred to in de Groot's source as "detected ... but not yet captured" (*chu, weihuo* 查獲未擒).

<sup>35</sup> This is particularly true for the Grand Canal city of Linqing 臨清, which had already been the main flashpoint of the Wang Lun uprising and which would also become the main locus of the Eight Trigrams rebellion of 1813. See S. Naquin, *Shantung Rebellion*, p. xiii ff. for a brief account of sectarian insurrections during the late Ming (1622) and Qing.

<sup>36</sup> The changing delineations of the missionary regions in China can be followed in de Moidrey, *La Hiérarchie Catholique*, pp. 246-261.

<sup>37</sup> The standard history of the Catholic missions to the "hermit kingdom" during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is Charles Dallet, *Histoire de l'Eglise de Corée, précédée d'une introduction sur l'histoire, les institutions, la langue, les mœurs et coutumes coréens*, Paris: Librairie Victor Palmé

European missions established in Japan and in China. It is commonly assumed that the first shoots of Korean Christianity began no earlier than in March 1784, with the return from Beijing of the Korean Christian Lee Sung-hun, baptised and prepared for mission by the Qing-court Jesuit Jean-Joseph de Grammont.<sup>38</sup> Recent research, however, suggests that sizeable Christian communities existed in Korea from as early as 1605. The Korean church can thus be regarded as having generated itself without any direct foreign influence.<sup>39</sup> The pre-missionary church owed its existence to the exposure to Japanese Christianity during the invasions orchestrated by Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1592 and 1597), and in particular to converted slaves who were allowed to return to their Korean homeland.<sup>40</sup> Slave-converts soon earned a reputation of extraordinary devotion to their new faith, defying the ever-increasing pressure of the Tokugawa inquisition.<sup>41</sup> These qualities would later prove indispensable in Korea, too, during the anti-Christian persecutions of the late eighteenth century.<sup>42</sup> Throughout its early period, links with Christian communities in Japan and China, as well as religious writings by Western missionaries, enabled the Korean communities to

---

1874. The ensuing period of Protestant proselytisation is summarised in Allen D. Clark, *A History of the Church in Korea*, Seoul: The Christian Literature Society of Korea 1971.

<sup>38</sup> Dallet's account begins with the period between 1784 and 1794, which witnessed the arrival of a Jacques Tsiou (Zhou Wenmo), *prêtre chinois* and envoy of the Bishop of Beijing, as well as the proselytism of the convert Ni Tek-tso (Piek-i). See Ch. Dallet, *Histoire de l'Eglise de Corée*, volume 1, pp. 26-82.

<sup>39</sup> This is at least the opinion of Juan Ruiz-de-Medina, supported by his own research and by recent contributions by Korean scholars. See Juan Ruiz-de-Medina (John Bridges, trans.), *The Catholic Church in Korea: its Origins 1566-1784*, Rome: Istituto Storico Societatis Iesu 1991 (translated from the Spanish original *Orígenes de la Iglesia Católica Coreana*, Rome 1987), pp. 7-9. The very first contacts with Christian thought originated from the distribution of Christian catechisms in classical Chinese towards the end of the sixteenth century. See *ibidem*, pp. 77-79. By the 1620s, the number of Christians in Korea had risen to several thousand (see pp. 88 and 130-131).

<sup>40</sup> See J. Ruiz-de-Medina, *The Catholic Church in Korea*, p. 110, note 26 (on Hideyoshi's decree to release Korean slaves/prisoners of war, based on a contemporary letter by the Franciscan Martín de la Ascensión). The very first "Christians", by the way, were some two hundred infants, abandoned by parents fleeing the advancing Japanese troops and baptised by a conquering Christian samurai. See *ibidem*, p. 74. A vivid example of *samizdat*-style copying of catechisms in Chinese characters by Korean prisoners in Japan is presented on p. 87.

<sup>41</sup> An interesting reference from the seventeenth century commenting on the steadfastness of Korean Christians in Japan - women in particular - can be found in G. Elison, *Deus Destroyed*, p. 207.

sustain their religious zeal. After the anti-Christian persecutions and the proclamation of protective isolation by the Tokugawa *bakufu*, the Korean communities looked to the mission in Beijing for spiritual guidance.<sup>43</sup> Hierarchical structures were created which mirrored those of the missionary church in Beijing, but which remained practically independent of the mother-mission in the capital. Independence also prevailed in theological terms, in particular with reference to the Confucian ancestor rites.<sup>44</sup> Despite successive waves of persecution during the first half of the nineteenth century, the number of Christians increased to over thirteen thousand by the year 1855, when the first Korean priest, Kim Tai-Kon faced execution. Attempts by Catholic and Protestant missionaries alike to overcome the anti-Christian laws of Korea were ultimately crowned with success.<sup>45</sup> Around the same time, in itself a clear sign of inculturation, the syncretic “Celestial Way” movement (*Ch’ondo-gyo* □□□□□) was proliferating in Korea. Under the leadership of the charismatic Ch’oe Che-u □□□□□ (1824-1864), the religion had particular appeal amongst the rural population, many of whom had converted to Catholicism, but who had not surrendered their belief in the spirits which had been governing life in their villages from times immemorial. On a more intellectual plane, the inculturation of Christian elements produced a cross-fertilisation of religion and philosophy reminiscent of Taiping ideology. The Christian god, venerated as the “Supreme Emperor” (□□□□), supervised a celestial hierarchy inhabited by ancient Korean spirit creatures,

---

<sup>42</sup> See A. Clark, *A History of the Church in Korea*, pp. 50-51.

<sup>43</sup> Often via the Christian communities established since the early eighteenth century in Liaodong province. See J. Ruiz-de-Medina, *The Catholic Church in Korea*, pp. 172-174.

<sup>44</sup> ... at least until the Beijing bishops imposed the results of the Rites Controversy on their Korean neighbours. See A. Clark, 1971, pp. 49-50.

<sup>45</sup> See A. Clark, *A History of the Church in Korea*, pp. 53-54. On the Catholic side, the French orders took over the role of protector of all Catholic missions. The most important attempts made by Protestant missionaries were those of Carl Gützlaff (1832), Robert J. Thomas (1865/66), John Ross and John

Confucian sages, Buddhist and Christian saints. The socio-political essence distilled out of this syncretic whole was referred to as the “Eastern Teaching” (*tong-hak* 東學), and called for a thorough-going transformation of the existing political system. The guardians of the latter responded with little sympathy, and beheaded Ch’oe Che-u in 1864, bringing the movement to its (official) end.<sup>46</sup>

---

McIntyre (1867 and 1874-1884), as well as by the returned Korean student Rijutei (Yi Kyoo-Tai) who converted while studying in Japan. See *ibidem*, pp. 59-68.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. James Huntley Grayson, *Early Buddhism and Christianity in Korea*, pp. 82-83.

b) *The Christian heartland at the turn of the century*

Meanwhile the situation was becoming more difficult even in the Chinese capital. The death of Bishop Bernardinus della Chiesa in December 1721, though the bishop had never actually resided in the capital, ushered in a period of increasing instability for its Christians. His successors<sup>47</sup> encountered mounting difficulties in extending their protection from the four churches of the capital into the surrounding provinces. At the outset of the Qianlong years, the Jesuits residing in the capital accounted for twenty-two priests, including six employed by the Imperial Court and five Jesuits of Chinese nationality. The figures for the year 1785 reveal that both the total number and the ethnic proportion remained largely unchanged - seven Chinese priests compared to sixteen foreigners.<sup>48</sup> It was from these Beijing-based congregations that the Christian communities in surrounding Zhili Province gained their logistical and moral support during a period when the missionary presence in the provinces was limited and transient.<sup>49</sup> The authority of European Christianity had been greatly weakened by the consequences of the Rites Controversy, and finally also by the dissolution of the Society of Jesus in 1773. Following the imperial ban on missionary activity outside Beijing and Macau, any work by European or Chinese

---

<sup>47</sup> Francisco da Rocha Froes (died June 1733), Polycarpo Souza (died May 1757), Damascenus Salutti (left office April 1780), Alexander de Gouvea (died July 1807), and finally Joachim de Souza-Saraiva (in office until 1818 - not to be replaced by a residing bishop until 1826) - see Zhao Qingyuan 赵清元 *Zhongguo tianzhujiao jiaogu huafen jiqi shouzhang jieti nianbiao* 中国天主教教区划分及其首任主教继任年表 "Annual Compendium of the Dioceses and their Leaders in Catholic China", Tainan: Wen-dao chubanshe 文道出版社 1980, p. 27.

<sup>48</sup> The persecution of 1785 represent the second high tide of persecutions during the Qianlong period. See Ma Zhao, "Shilun Qianlong shiqi (1736-1796) chajin tianzhujiao shijian", pp. 17-18.

<sup>49</sup> Zhao Qingyuan's figures also mirror the scarcity of priests in the rest of the empire: the Nanjing diocese only counting one foreign priest alongside Laimbeckhoven, six Chinese and three European priests for the whole of Sichuan Province, four Spanish Dominicans and three Chinese *patres* in Fujian Province, plus one of the former in Shandong. The double-province of Guangdong and Guangxi counted one foreign priest each, while Shanxi was under the spiritual guidance of three Chinese fathers.

missionaries was, by definition, clandestine.<sup>50</sup> A well-documented example is the Austrian Father Laimbeckhoven, Bishop of Nanjing from the 1770s until 1785, who spent most of his time as a missionary travelling under cover of the night on barges and along forsaken country lanes.<sup>51</sup> Any home or hostel which granted him accommodation did so at their own peril, as magistrates offered payment in cash to any informer. Other European missionaries braving the perils of the Qianlong persecutions included the Italian M. Correa, as well as de Lamatte, de la Roche and Pottier from France.<sup>52</sup> Indicative of the isolation facing missionaries during this period is the request for spiritual support by the Chinese cleric Cassius Joseph Taj, sent by letter to the Vatican on 25 December 1779.<sup>53</sup> In his missive, Taj reports having contracted a “disease resembling leprosy” caused by the adverse climate. Combining this fatal physical illness with the status of a heretical criminal, this double outcast was resigned to the fact of having forsaken the sympathy of the people in his native land - Christians and gentiles alike. Deprived of all material support, the medics refused to offer any further help, and the only hope now rested with the prayers of the faithful in China and in Rome. The letter continues to emphasise the scorn poured out by the literati, as well as the dangers of the roving, nocturnal existence.<sup>54</sup> All,

---

<sup>50</sup> It has been estimated that at least forty missionaries were risking their lives for the propagation of their mission. See “Ma Zhao, Shilun Qianlong shiqi (1736-1796) chajin tianzhujiao shijian”, p. 8.

<sup>51</sup> Gottfried-Xavier Laimbeckhoven S.J. (1707-1787, *Nan Huairan* 南怀仁 - Laimbeckhoven shared his name with Ferdinand Verbiest, 1623-1688) is mentioned in conjunction with his successor as Coadjutor Bishop of Nanjing Nathanaël Bürger OSF (1733-1780) in de Moidrey, *La hiérarchie Catholique*, pp. 28-30 (see also the annex on Bürger, *ibidem*, pp. 242-243).

<sup>52</sup> For a vivid description of this period, see Joseph Krah, *China Missions in Crisis - Father Laimbeckhoven and his Times, 1738-1787*, Rome: Gregorian University Press 1964. Mgr Pottier's fate is renarrated in the appendix (note C) of Léonide Guiot, *La Mission du Su-tchuen au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, pp. 472-480.

<sup>53</sup> APF, SC, *Indie Orientali/Cina*, 1779-1781, folium 236R.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibidem*. The passage in the original: *Hinc ergo Eminentia Vestra sciat, velim, infirmitatem non aliam, quam leprosa specia infecta ...; eo facto non solum domi manere, quinimo abscondere, quoniam apud Sinicam nationem est maxima iniuria praesertim familias civilioribus, ac dignitate praecinctis. Hoc quidam non aliunde, scienti gentiles maledicunt de me praejudicantque, quam re ex humore hujus*



however, was not lost. The remaining missionary presence yielded several seminaries, which were as much a secret as missionary activity as such. Foreign missionaries took special care of the young Chinese novices, on whom the whole mission would soon have to rely. To offer the most thorough theological training, the young Christians were taken to the seminaries in the capital or in Macau - the two areas excluded from the general prohibition of missionary activity. During the latter half of the century, the *Missions Etrangères de Paris* expanded from their earlier operations in Siam, establishing centres of theological training for novices from China. The priests of the Chinese College at Naples were soon to join their Parisian confrères in the erection of missionary colleges in China.<sup>55</sup> But also in the provinces seminaries developed, most prominently in the flourishing Christian communities of Sichuan.<sup>56</sup> The last persecutions of the Qianlong period, though initially successful in the very heartland of Chinese Christianity - the diocese of Nanjing, as well as in the imperial capital itself - lost momentum due to the resistance of local officials sympathetic to Christianity.<sup>57</sup> In a report produced for the Vatican, the Chinese convert Francesco Maria Zen gave a description of the situation for the Christians in Nanjing towards the end of the eighteenth century: Though reduced in size, lacking an official clerical hierarchy and deprived of overt places of worship, the community was nevertheless very active, congregating secretly in order to escape the attention of officials and mischievous neighbours. The official structure of clerical life had been damaged

---

*climatis, et rore caeli provenit qui sunt maxime nocivi eiusque iis salute inconstantibus. ... Licet hoc infirmitas itasit odiosa, in Deo tamen non desper[ar]me, ....*

<sup>55</sup> The correspondence between the Chinese novices of Naples and their mother country has been illustrated by Francesco D'Arelli and A. Tamburello, in *La Missione Cattolica in Cina tra i secoli*.

<sup>56</sup> The Seminary of the Sacred Birth was situated in the depths of the Phoenix Mountains, in the vicinity of Chengdu. The centre accommodated nearly seven hundred novices and formed the basis for missionary activity in and south of Sichuan. See Zhang Ze, *Qingdai jinjiaoqi de tianzhujiao*, pp. 156 - 159.

beyond repair - a situation which was nowhere as evident as in Nanjing, the former centre of gravity of Chinese Christianity. Missionary correspondence from the end of the century confirms that in

the city of Nanjing ..., following the persecutions against the professors of the faith, the number of Christians has diminished. Most preachers have left because of the troubles, ..., the Bishop is still here for the time being, administering his office in hiding, and also the missionaries of these parts carry out their work secretly.<sup>58</sup>

The attitude of the Jiaqing 嘉庆 government towards Christianity changed from a policy of benign neglect during its first decade to one of relentless persecution for the remaining fifteen years. It has frequently been remarked that the tolerance of the first years had its roots in genuine ignorance, aided by the remaining court missionaries, who extolled the merits of Western technology and fine arts to the young emperor while deliberately deflecting from their continuing missionary work. Another factor was the clandestine nature of all missionary activity, following the harshness of the latter Qianlong years: To the officials of the capital, rural Christianity was very nearly “invisible”.<sup>59</sup> This superficial image of inactivity caused the inexperienced emperor to believe that the Christian problem had been sufficiently “dealt with” -

<sup>57</sup> Such as De Pei, governor-general of the Hu-Guang double-province, a secret Christian who assisted the persecuted community throughout his official life (1688-1752; baptised together with his wife and daughter in 1718). See J. Krahll, *China Missions in Crisis*, pp. 3-4 and 9-10.

<sup>58</sup> See APF, SC, *Indie Orientali/Cina*, 1779-1781, ff. 283-284 and 266-269. *Civitas de Nankin ... quorum tamen Christianorum numerus post postremas persecutiones ab ethnicis in Christianae fidei professores excitatos, hanc parim diminutus existit. ... sed his fere omnibus predicatorum persecutionum turbine eversis, quem in dicta Nankinensis civitate ad praesens nulla neque cathedralis neque Parochialis ecclesia reperiatur, episcopus pro tempore existens, ibi Pontificalia occulte peragit, ac Missionarii in dictis Provinciis existentes, clam animorum curam exercent.* Of interest, in this context, is a memorial from the Yongzheng period (YZ 8/5, i.e. June/July 1730, by the governor general of Zhejiang province, Li Wei□□□□). The memorial announced the destruction of Nanjing's cathedral in order to deter the citizens of Nanjing from future conversion and in order to leave a forceful impression on any [illegal] foreign visitors (□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□).

while in reality foreign mercantile and missionary activity in the southern border regions escaped the effective control of the imperial government. Furthermore, many of the areas with Christian communities lived in penury, which deflected the attention of the magistrates, who concluded that not enough fiscal gain could be expected to warrant the arduous journey to remote villages.<sup>60</sup> The year 1796 was a turning point for the Qing dynasty, who - having been spared dangerous insurrections for most of the eighteenth century - now saw themselves confronted with unrest emanating from the White Lotus movement from Gansu in the West to Henan in the east of the Chinese heartland.<sup>61</sup> Earlier uprisings, such as the Wang Lun rebellion of 1774 and the White Lotus rebellion of 1786 could be quelled within a matter of months. The great uprising of the 1796 took seven years to be pacified, leaving the greater part of the White Lotus movement outside the area of suppression by and large intact. In an effort to regain the initiative, the Qing government promulgated a series of general persecutions against religious movements, which also targeted the Christian communities.

---

<sup>59</sup> This fact is confirmed in numerous examples of missionary correspondence, such as the letter by the Chinese priest Petrus Maria Lai, who refers to his missionary pasture grounds of northern Hu-Guang as being “at peace” (*Missio ... gaudet statu pacis*). APF, SC, *Indie Orientali/Cina*, 1779-1781, folium 117.

<sup>60</sup> See *ibidem* (verso) on the effects of a failed harvest and the effects of price inflation in a poor district in Hubei.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Barend ter Haar’s study on the nature and official interpretation of the White Lotus phenomenon in Late Imperial China: B.J. ter Haar, *The White Lotus Teaching*, p. 295 ff. See also de Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution*, pp. 350-382.

### **3. The Adeodato affair and the persecution of 1805**

The effects of the persecutions unleashed at the beginning of the nineteenth century, in contrast to the relative leniency of the Qianlong years, were very painful for China's Christian communities. The first spate of government action was sparked off in 1805 by the discovery of a map outlining the boundaries of the areas of missionary influence in China. Frater Adeodato di San Agostino (OSAD, Chinese name De Tianci 德天基), an Italian belonging to the contingent of the *Propaganda*, intended to inform his Augustinian confrères about the areas administered by missionaries of the Augustinian order. The map was discovered due to "a substantial lack of prudence displayed by the Europeans in Beijing, who transported many pages of letters interspersed among a great number of books in Chinese on matters of the Holy Faith."<sup>62</sup> The state officials then suspected this map as being part of a European plot against the state, or possibly an invasion of the Qing coast from the east. The account by Emmanuele Conforti on the reasons for the anti-Christian state action continues with the chain of events which provided the spark igniting persecution, the effects of which were to be felt throughout the century.

Having worked in the Forbidden City for more than thirty years, Adeodato knew the conditions of the empire well. In 1804, the same year when Gaetano Pires Pereira (Chinese name Bi Xueyuan 毕雪元), a court astronomer in the capital, was selected by Pius VII to become bishop of Nanjing, a Portuguese missionary instructed the Chinese Christian Chen Ruowang 陈若望 to travel to Beijing. The object of the mission was to collect a map and a letter outlining a missionary dispute affecting the

---

<sup>62</sup> *Un imprudenza non considerata dalla parte degli Europei Pekinesi, in rimettere molti plichi di lettere interessanti con gran copia de libri cinesi trattandi di materie della Santa Religione...* . This is the beginning of the account by Emmanuele Conforti on the persecution of 1805. Cf. APF document SC, series III, *Cina and Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, folium 398 R.

border area of Zhili and Shandong from Adeodato's own hands.<sup>63</sup> The map sketched the areas between Dezhou and Qiuzhou in Shandong as well as Guangpingfu and Jingzhou in Zhili, and included the coastal shores of the province of Shandong.<sup>64</sup> Once he had returned to the Portuguese, bearing the Chinese name Li Shide 李失德, in Guangzhou, he was to convey the map to Macau, and thence to the Vatican for inspection. In February 1805 Chen Ruowang was intercepted by soldiers under the command of the superintendent for Jiangxi Province, Qin Cheng'en 秦承恩. An indignant superintendent Qin informed the emperor that "letters bearing both Western and Chinese script" had come into his possession, indicating that the foreign court official Adeodato had intended to pass on subversive materials on the provincial borders of Shandong to foreign powers. With the visit of the Macartney mission to the late Qianlong emperor still in fresh memory, and reports of increasing activity by English merchant and naval vessels in neighbouring parts of Asia becoming a common occurrence, the Jiaqing emperor suspected that the final recipient of map and information was the British crown.<sup>65</sup> Following scrutiny of the testimonies - mainly provided by Christians employed in the capital and from areas in Shandong and Zhili - the Board of Punishment gained a detailed picture of the intimate relationship between the foreign residents of Beijing and their fellow Christians outside the boundaries of the capital. This insight, reports of increasing Christian activity in the provinces, and the fact that numerous Bannermen had entered the disdainful creed against all prohibitions, gave the Jiaqing emperor the impression that no time could be lost if the heretical religion was to be contained. In an edict promulgated in the fifth month of

---

<sup>63</sup> The dispute was between missionaries belonging to the Portuguese *padroado* (CM) and those of the Propaganda (OFM).

<sup>64</sup> *I soldati aperte le lettere, in una di queste ritrovata una mappa delicata a mano ... a caratteri cinesi di varii luoghi della provincia di Xan-Tung ... e sue finanze col mare. (Ibidem)*

<sup>65</sup> The Macartney mission is discussed in chapter 10.

his tenth year on the imperial throne, the emperor took up the incident involving the discovery of the Adeodato map and used its potentially subversive character as the immediate reason for action against the foreign religion:

The foreigners believe in the teaching of the Lord of Heaven, and as they followed the customs of our country there was never any reason to ban it. And when they set up churches in the capital district, this was only done in order to assist us in astronomy by using their Western methods..., but they were not allowed to have regular contact with commoners from the provinces. And yet this De Tianci had the gall to stealthily spread his religion..., to instruct simple-minded commoners in order to confound women, and to lead many a Bannerman into his creed. ... If we did not adopt strict measures, how else could we stop the heresy and put an end to all of this?<sup>66</sup>

During the interrogation, Adeodato reminded the state prosecutors that he had acted within the limits of the law, since he was travelling from Beijing to Macau using the shortest route, without intending to stop en route in order to proselytise. Nor had the map itself been written by him (it happened to be a copy of his map), but for the sake of honesty he admitted that the romanisations of the Chinese place names stemmed from his nib. This admission proved fatal, both for the missionary in person and for the China mission in general. The chief state official announced that due to the machinations of the foreign missionaries and the depraved nature of the foreign religion in general, the emperor was now no longer inclined to tolerate the Christian religion in his empire.<sup>67</sup> Most of the Chinese accomplices, including the leading figures of Christian life in Beijing as well as the brother of the eminent missionary Paul Ge, Ge Tianfu, were given the choice between apostasy and gaol. Once they had turned their backs on their former faith, it was stated, they would be free to pursue their normal lives, though always under the auspices of the yamen officials, and with the threat of more severe punishment in case of further transgressions. As most of the

---

<sup>66</sup> See *Daqing renzong rui huangdi shilu* 大清仁宗睿皇帝實錄 (“Veritable Records of the Jiaqing Emperor”), *juan* 142, JQ 10/5/28 (25 June 1805).

<sup>67</sup> ... *qual Ministero di Stato avendola annunziato che l'Imperatore vuole annientare la Religione Cristiana nel suo imperio* ... Cf. APF SC, series III, *Cina and Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, folium 398 V.

Beijing Christians refused to comply with the “amnesty”, the sentences were announced: Deportation to Yili - “six months’ distance from Beijing” - where the Christians would be given as slaves to the local Barbarians, as well as being forced to wear the cangue for a period of three months, *a terrore de’ populari*.<sup>68</sup> The emperor rejected the initial suggestion of the Board of Punishment to have Adeodato deported, deciding instead to exile the missionary to Jehol (Chengde), beyond the boundaries of China proper, where he would be under the direct supervision of the Board of Military Affairs.<sup>69</sup> The punishment was communicated to all districts in the empire in order to state a warning to China’s Christian communities, in particular against those who were collaborating with European missionaries in order to facilitate the entry of the latter.<sup>70</sup> The highly publicised verdict and the ensuing state action, which embraced all the provinces where Christian communities were known or suspected, put missionaries, both of European and Chinese origin, into the worst position since the persecutions of the mid-eighteenth century.<sup>71</sup> The Adeodato affair influenced the Qing elite’s perception of Christianity significantly. After three generations of a quickly diminishing foreign presence, and the growing awareness that Chinese Christianity had become an “internal” phenomenon, the stigma of Christianity’s “alien origin” was now being reattached.<sup>72</sup> The negative consequences of the foreign missionaries’ effort for China’s indigenous communities were set to intensify over the subsequent decades.

---

<sup>68</sup> Cf., *ibidem*, folium 399 V.

<sup>69</sup> Adeodato was eventually allowed to leave the Qing empire, whereupon he decided to move to the Philippines. He died in Manila in 1821.

<sup>70</sup> ... *paraque quede totalmente abolida la propagacion de su secta y que no corrompa y mude los coraciones de los hombres* - “in order to relinquish the propagation of his sect and in order to abstain from corrupting and changing the minds of the people”. Cf. the Propaganda report on the Adeodato affair, in APF SOCP, *Indie Orientali*, 1817, ff. 34-35. The accusation of selling out the Chinese empire to foreigners was aimed at Chinese subjects such as Paul Ge [Ko], who had accompanied the Macartney embassy and was to become active in Zhaojiazhuang, Zhili province.

<sup>71</sup> The edict was dated Jiaqing 10/4/10, i.e. 8 May 1806. A letter attached to the above report, sent from Macau on 30 January 1806, illustrates the “almost physical impossibility” to support the existing missionary stations - Although this statement refers only to the Christian communities where European missionaries were involved. Cf. *ibidem*, folium 35 R.

<sup>72</sup> ... though a multitude of religious cases would continue to refer to Christianity without the slightest reference to any foreign roots or connections. For evidence see, for instance, the decree concerning the treatment of arrested Sichuanese Christians (*tianzhujiaren* 天竺教人) of 2 July 1815, cited in de Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution*, pp. 478-479.

#### 4. *The Persecution of 1811 and its aftermath*

The beginning of the nineteenth century was a time of increasing sectarian activity and concomitant repression by the Qing authorities. The state's anti-heresy campaign reached an early climax with the suppression of the Eight Trigrams Uprising in 1813.<sup>73</sup> Other cults based on religious concepts closely related to the Eight Trigrams emerged throughout Han China. The Eight Trigrams (*bagua* 八卦), headed by Lin Qing 林清, were akin to the White Yang (*Baiyang* 白陽) sect thus also to the Red Yang (*Hongyang* 紅陽) sect.<sup>74</sup> Other religious movements condemned by the authorities were the Father and Mother sect (*Fumuhui* 父老母老), the Society of Increase of Novices (*Tiandihui* 天德會 probably a synonym for the Heaven and Earth Society, *Tiandihui* 天地會), the Pure Tea (*Qingchamen* 清茶), Mahayana (*Dashengjiao* 大乘教) and Incense Smelling (*Wenxiangjiao* 聞香教) teachings, as well as the Society of Three in One (*Sanhehui* 三和會) in Guangdong. Officials reported the occurrence of such heterodox movements in the usual condemnatory style. "Men and women indecently congregating" for cultic purposes (*nannü hunza huxiang xijiao* 男女混雜聚教), for instance, was an allegation generically allotted to religious communities deemed "heretical". This categorisation included the Mahayana cult as much as the steadily growing Christian communities, and called for the relentless punishment of Christians and other "sectarians". "Of late", the emperor was

---

<sup>73</sup> Analysed in great detail in Susan Naquin, *Millenarian Rebellion in China*. For a brief account see de Groot, *Sectarianism and Persecution*, p. 409 ff.

<sup>74</sup> A view held by de Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution*, p. 443, *passim*. See also R. H. C. Shek, "Religion and Society", pp. 276-287, who is less outspoken in this regard. The characters used for the Hongyang name can vary. The most common character combinations are 紅陽 and the alias of Hunyuanmen 混元門 ("School of Primeval Chaos"). Shek describes the *Baiyang* (白陽 "White Yang", alias 白海 "White Ocean") as a "perfect amalgam of the Hong-yang, Huang-tian, and Yuan-dun sects." (*ibidem*, p. 305). "White Yang"



warned in 1814, “Christianity is again promulgated and professed here. ... those who tolerate such people must be punished, in order that the evil influence of heresy shall be annulled, and the loyal thus be made to live in peace.”<sup>75</sup>

Despite all attempts to blot out Christian proselytisation, Chinese and even a handful of European missionaries made active use of the growing popular dissent in the provinces. Shanxi Province, the old Franciscan missionary field, had largely escaped the repercussions of the 1805 persecution.<sup>76</sup> During the latter Qianlong and early Jiaqing years, the province had been administered by the bishop of Beijing, Alexandre de Gouvea (TOR), though most of the ecclesiastic footwork was being carried out autonomously.<sup>77</sup> Christianity in the province prospered even further when the Franciscan cleric Antonio Luigi Landi (*alias* da Signa, 1749-1811, the Franciscan Vicar Apostolic and Titular Bishop of Antheon) assumed the title of bishop over Shanxi in 1804, and showed few signs of intimidation when the newly appointed bishop died only two years later. This relative lack of friction was indeed rather recent. During the final quarter of the eighteenth century, the Christian communities within the province had been the focus of intramissionary contention. The reason for this was to be found in the imposition of strict clerical discipline by the bishop of Shanxi and Vicar Apostolic for the provinces of Shanxi and Shaanxi, Mariano Zaralli (OFM) and, upon his death in 1790, by his successor Giambattista Cortenova (*alias* Giambattista di Mandello). At least in part intended to weed out tendencies towards the

---

is of course also the name of the third, kalpa of the Buddha of the Future (Maitreya). See Naquin, *Shantung Rebellion*, p. 56.

<sup>75</sup> Quoted in de Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution*, pp. 470-471. For text and translation of the memorial, see Appendix 5.

<sup>76</sup> The Shanxi and Shaanxi missions had, however, been founded by the Jesuits Etienne Le Fèvre, Alfonso Vagnoni and Michel Trigault during the 1640s and 50s (Le Fèvre died in a little village in Shanxi in May 1659). See F. Margiotti, *Il cattolicesimo nello Shansi*, p. 94 ff. and 121 ff.

reintroduction of the banned ancestral rites, and of other elements with roots in Chinese tradition, the measures provoked an indignant reaction from both clergy and the grassroots.<sup>78</sup> The dispute swiftly took on such proportions that the bishop of Beijing, Alexandre Gouvea, saw himself forced to intervene. He took sides with the Chinese Christians, and implored the Vatican to send an apostolic visitor to calm the volatile situation. As so often, the irony of history was to be found in a practical detail: The letter sent to the Propaganda took almost four years to arrive - by which time the quarrel over clerical discipline had already been settled for more than one year. The Roman cardinals, however, were unaware of these developments and had already decided that a full investigation was to be carried out, and thus instructed the bishop of Beijing that all missionaries were to undergo an official visitation. The man selected for this important function was Don Emmanuele Conforti (1787-1837), a missionary of the (now defunct) Missionary Society of St. John the Baptist.<sup>79</sup> Having aggravated the already tense situation by antagonising Luigi Landi and the Chinese clergy in general, Conforti continued with his project by visiting all congregations which had a reputation for internal discord. Never far from danger and death, Conforti finally concluded his visitation by signing the final version of his report in September 1798. For details on the local conditions he had relied heavily on the knowledge of his secretary Camillus Chao. During the following fourteen years, Conforti rejoined his missionary homebase, the Propaganda parish in the west of Beijing, where he stayed

---

<sup>77</sup> The mountainous topography of much of the province favoured the local self-administration of the province, while protecting its Christian communities from prosecuting officials. For a brief introduction, see B. Willeke, "The Report of the Apostolic Visitation", pp. 198-205.

<sup>78</sup> A protest letter sent by the Chinese priest Stephen Bao to the Propaganda can be inspected at the APF as document SO, "Indie Orientali e Cina" (1793-1795), ff. 247-249 [n.b. I owe this information to Professor B. Willeke, without having verified the contents of the source].

<sup>79</sup> These details can be found in B. Willeke, "The Report of the Apostolic Visitation", pp. 197-199.

until the last foreign missionaries were evicted from the Xitang in 1811.<sup>80</sup> With the original intention of demonstrating that the double province was under resolute missionary control, the report on the contrary indicates a significant degree of “unauthorised” expressions of Christian religiosity, as well as social interaction with the pagan majority.

Even more independent from missionary supervision were the Christian communities in Sichuan province,<sup>81</sup> which multiplied during the century of repression. Under the clerical administration of Bishop Dufresse (*alias* Xu Dexin 徐德新), the province was divided into two vicariates apostolic of more than four hundred thousand Christians, administered by sixteen Chinese and two European priests. Christians could in general carry out their nuptial and funerary ceremonies without interference from district officials, and yamen runners, low-ranking bureaucrats and the general population welcomed the growing communities with curiosity rather than suspicion - a fact mirrored both in the contemporary missionary correspondence as well as in memorials to the central administration in Beijing. The relative safety of the Christian community in the province, gave confidence both to the Chinese Christians and the foreign missionaries. This situation formed the backdrop to the Synod of Sichuan of 1803, where the foundations for a new missionary movement, more closely oriented along the interpretations and practices of the Chinese population, were established.<sup>82</sup>

---

<sup>80</sup> The *Xitang* had also been the clerical home of Adeodato, whom Conforti knew very well. Conforti died at Pulo-Pinang, the modern Malaysian Penang, after another quarter century of missionary work in 1837. The MEP maintained a seminary on the island, the first of settlement established by the East India Company, where Conforti worked until his death. Cf. B. Willeke, “The Report of the Apostolic Visitation”, pp. 198-204.

<sup>81</sup> Which during the Jiaqing period also included Guizhou and Yunnan. Cf. Zhang Ze, *Qingdai jinjiaoqi de tianzhujiao*, pp. 172-176.

<sup>82</sup> The important synod, and the growth of Christianity in this province have been analysed by Robert Entenmann in “The Establishment of Chinese Catholic Communities”, pp. 147-161. As most of the

The persecution caused by the discovery of Adeodato's map was the beginning of the attempted violent suppression of Christianity during the three decades preceding the end of the Canton trade system, and coincided with the gradual reimmersion of foreign missionaries into the Qing empire. The administration appointed three high-ranking officials whose sole task it was to supervise the activities of the remaining missionaries. The explanation for this escalation of anti-missionary activity was terse - "because of the fact that the Christian religion of the Europeans goes against the traditions, and corrupts the hearts".<sup>83</sup> The events of 1805 were exacerbated by the fact that three years later Alexandre de Gouvea, tolerant and popular bishop of Beijing's Christians, passed away. Less than two years earlier, Gouvea had given in to the requests by concerned Christian leaders and cardinal figures of the Catholic hierarchy in Rome to leave his diocese in order to look after his health.<sup>84</sup> Gouvea's main intention, however, was to travel to Macau in order to train missionaries in a school for Chinese novices, who would then move to Beijing in order to set up a seminary, "under [Gouvea's] direction".<sup>85</sup> The newly recruited missionaries would then have been in the position to supplement the four Chinese

---

foreign priests were of French origin, the bulk of the relevant missionary correspondence is located in the archives of the Missions Etrangères de Paris. Of the Chinese archives, the one situated in Ba-xian (Chongqing, Sichuan) harbours the most fertile collections. See also Léonide Guiot, *La Mission du Sut-chuen au XVIII<sup>e</sup>me siècle*, pp. 425-426.

<sup>83</sup> ... *porque la Religion Christiana de los Europeos perjudica mucho a los costumbres, y corrompe los corazones*. See the letter by C. J. Létondal to Pedro Gravina, titular archbishop of Nicea and Nuncio in Madrid, Macau 19 January 1806, APF SC, series III, *Cina and Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, folium 30 V. The officials are named as *Lon-kam*, *Cham-lim* and *Gin-xo*, and have yet to be identified.

<sup>84</sup> Culminating in the recommendation by Pope Pius VII of 1804. Cf. letter of 5 November 1806 by Alexander Gouvea to the Vatican, APF SC, series III, *Cina and Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, folium 179.

<sup>85</sup> Interestingly, one of the first attempts to set up a college for Chinese novices in the vicinity of the Qing shores - on Polopinang island, claimed by the East India Company and other English trade companies, as suggested by Giovanni-Battista Martini - foundered because of opposition from the Propaganda. The *Sacra Congregatio* objected that the English traders would draw too many material benefits from the purchase of the land, and because, after all, the English were to be regarded as *eretici*, who thus posed a danger to doctrinal purity in the seminary. The Philippines, as Spanish crown land, hence provided a better location for the school. Cf. the report entitled "Observations on the

priests already active in the congregations of the capital.<sup>86</sup> His successor, Joaquim de Souza-Saraiva (CM), was unable to leave Macau for the capital, which meant that for the following ten years up to his death in January 1818, the congregations in Beijing were left without direct spiritual guidance. In July 1811 issued the sternest warning yet to all remaining missionaries still employed by the imperial administration.<sup>87</sup> In the same year, the Christian centre around the Western Church (*Xitang* 西堂) was suppressed. The following year saw the demolition of the Eastern Church (*Dongtang* 東堂).<sup>88</sup> This policy affected all buildings used for church activities, in particular the oratories set aside for Christian women, but also houses owned or rented by the missionaries for storing printing presses, books and other equipment.<sup>89</sup> The persecution against the Christian congregations in Beijing had been ignited by an edict in seven articles, issued by the Jiaqing emperor in 1811.<sup>90</sup> The edict placed the logistics of the operation into the hands of specifically appointed officials, who were given the task of invigilating the homes of the Europeans in the capital (Article 1).

---

Construction of a Chinese College in the Philippines” (*Osservazioni sull’erezione d’un collegio di Sinesi nelle Isole Philippine*), APF SC, series III, *Cina and Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, ff. 190-191.

<sup>86</sup> *Pro nunc iam incoepti facere quod possum, id est, vocare missionarios, et juvenes illius provinciae, ut tam Macai, quam hic Pekini sub mea directione in seminario instruantur*. APF SC, series III, *Cina e Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, folium 179 R (and 180).

<sup>87</sup> The edict, dated JQ 16/7 (August/September 1811) is reprinted in Wang Zhichun, *Qingchao rouyuan ji*, pp. 163-164. The edict states that following an earlier expulsion, a mere seven missionaries remained in the capital. All were described as being “old and unable to be repatriated” (老弱不能回國). The names of these last remaining court missionaries are given as *Qian Deming* 前德明 (Jean Joseph Marie Amiot), *Li Gongchen* 李公陳 (Joseph Nunez Ribeira), *Gao Shoulian* 高守廉 (Verissimo Serra Monteiro), *He Mide* 何米德 (Mathurin de Lamathe [?]), *He Qingtai* 何清泰 (Louis de Poirot), *Ji Deming* 吉德明 (Jean-Joseph Ghislain) and *Bi Xueyuan* 畢雪元 (Gaetano Pires Pireiro). For details affecting the activity of foreign missionaries during the final decades of the missionary prohibition, see Bernward H. Willeke, *Imperial Government and Catholic Missions in China during the years 1784-1789*, St Bonaventure / New York: Franciscan Institute 1948, pp. 153-165.

<sup>88</sup> See Zhang Ze, *Qingdai jinjiaoqi de tianzhujiao*, p. 183.

<sup>89</sup> Already in May 1805 (JQ10/4), an edict prohibiting the printing and distribution of books (*kanke shuji* 刊刻書集) by Westerners (*xiyangren* 西洋人) in the capital itself - a consequence of the Adeodato affair. The same edict also made any religious congregations between foreigners and inhabitants of the provinces (*neidiren* 內地人) illegal. See Wang Zhichun, *Qingchao rouyuan ji*, p. 149.

<sup>90</sup> The edict can be found translated in the APF document SOCP, *Indie Orientali*, 1817, ff. 31-32.

Each church was to be guarded by sentries, each composed of one captain and five soldiers. Army barracks were to be erected in the vicinity of each church, with maximum discipline for the troops (Article 2). Article 3 stipulated what amounted to a reversal of imperial policy towards missionary activity in the capital, thus exceeding the restrictions imposed by the Yongzheng edict: “The Europeans”, we are reminded, “arrived in Beijing in order to serve the emperor.” The churches had thus been adorned with the inscription *Iglesia del Señor del Cielo, construida con el permiso del Emperador*. This could lead simple-minded subjects to the erroneous assumption that the Teachings of the Lord of Heaven was not a proscribed sect at all. For this reason, the Board of Public Buildings (*Tribunal de los Edificios*) has been ordered to erase all inscriptions and similar signs and symbols from the four churches, in order to prevent further misunderstandings. The following articles proscribed visits by Europeans to the homes of Chinese subjects, and with utter vehemence to members of the Mongolian and Manchurian Banners (*tartares*). The remaining missionaries at the Board of Mathematics now had to notify the commanders of the sentries, who would then accompany them to their place of work. Failure to act accordingly would entail the immediate withdrawal of the permit to work for the imperial government. This *de facto* house arrest also extended to intended visits to the four churches. All other ecclesiastic buildings - in particular the female oratories - were to be closed down with immediate effect, while offering financial compensation to the affected Europeans. All correspondence to be sent back to Europe, finally, had to be translated into Chinese by members of the Russian ecclesiastical mission and delivered to Qing officials. Under the auspices of the Board of War (*Tribunal de Milicia*), the letters were then to be transported to the offices belonging to the provincial governor-general for the Cantonese double-province in Guangzhou, who would then pass them on to traders en

route to Europe. The same degree of scrutiny applied to letters sent to the missionaries in Beijing. Otherwise, the edict ends, all other contacts - including those with missionaries in Macau - remained strictly forbidden.<sup>91</sup> The implications of the edict of 1811 for Chinese Christianity were momentous. The event firstly intensified allegations of connections between the Christian religion and the increasing incursions by foreigners from the West. It thus aggravated the pressure on the indigenous Christians, which had been mounting since the Adeodato affair of 1805. The Christians of the Chinese capital did not escape the effects of the persecution on this occasion. Far from being able to offer protection against official investigations, the presence of foreigners now added to the problems of the capital's community. As an interesting by-product of the persecution, the Christian villages of the surrounding area, in Zhili, were rejuvenated through the influx of refugees from the capital.

One year later, after the death in November 1813 of Louis Antoine de Poirot, the last survivor among the former Jesuits, and the demolition of the Northern Church 北方教堂 in 1827, it seemed that the century of state action against Christianity had finally yielded the results which the Yongzheng emperor had sought with his first edict in 1724.<sup>92</sup> As if to emphasise this intention, the Jiaqing officials opened criminal procedures against four Manchurian Bannermen, including two descendants of the Sunu clan, who had been punished for their Christian beliefs during the ascent of the Yongzheng emperor. In the summer of 1805, Tuqin 图钦, Tumin 图敏, Kuimin 库敏 and Woshibu 鄂舒布 were accused of "secretly adhering to Christianity", an offence with particularly grave consequences for Manchurian Bannermen. The

---

<sup>91</sup> *ibidem*, folium 32 R/V.

<sup>92</sup> Information provided by Edward Malatesta in chapter two (pp. 8-21) of his unpublished conference paper "China and the Society of Jesus: An Historical-Theological Essay", read at the *Symposium on the History of Christianity in China*, Hong Kong 2-4 October 1996.

imperial decree issued against the four religious offenders emphasises the link between loyalty to the throne and the religious identity of the Banner soldiers in all clarity:

The Board of Punishment reports to Us the discovery that Khwei-min, Wo-shih-pu, T'u-khin and T'u-min secretly profess the European religion. Over and over again, the road to conversion has been opened to them, but those convicts all the more steadfastly refuse to renounce their religion. The Board therefore proposes that they shall be exiled to Ili, and there be charged with prejudicial and crushing functions, etc. T'u-khin and T'u-min are great-grandsons of Su-nu, who in the Yung ching period for some crime was thrust out of the imperial family, and degraded to the rank of Red Girdle nobleman. As descendants of a culprit, they ought to have performed their duties and observed the laws; but they presumed secretly to profess the European religion, and though the said Board repeatedly offered to them an opportunity of conversion, they rejected its arguments, and from first to last clung to their errors, without repenting. This is a very heinous offence. They shall be divested of their dignity of Red Girdle noblemen; their names shall be erased from the Imperial family-register, and they shall be sent to Ili, where they are to wear the cangue for six months, and thereafter shall be employed for prejudicial and crushing work. Khwei-min and Wo-shih-pu likewise steadfastly declared themselves unwilling to forsake their religion, and willing to suffer punishment for it; they shall therefore be expelled from their Banner regiment and exiled to Ili, there to be exhibited for three months with a cangue around their necks, and then to be employed for prejudicial and crushing work. T'u-khin and the three other convicts ... have turned their backs upon Us and committed rebellion; therefore they shall never be set at liberty or return. The military Governor of those regions shall at all times inquire after them, and keep them under strict control and rule; and if they should run away from their place of exile, or in any other way cause trouble, he must respectfully request Our orders to put them to death.<sup>93</sup>

Cautious not to allow any hint of heresy to subvert the defence of the empire, the Qing rulers acted with almost equal vehemence against Christians within the Han Banners. Punishment was harsh, always resulting in demotion (*gezhi* 革職) and interrogation under torture, and - if found guilty - deportation to the barbarian tribes of the empire's north-west. In a verdict of the year 1814 by the veteran official Dong Gao 董高, the report of the discovery of Christian Banner officers is accompanied by the





materials calling for the overthrow of the ruling dynasty.<sup>96</sup> “Out of rage”, libraries and homes would be ransacked, objects burnt and Christians of all ages arrested. Chinese priests and head of local congregations would at least be exiled, while foreign missionaries were confronted with the alternative between exile and execution.<sup>97</sup> Increasingly aware of the interaction between the, still legal, missionary presence in Beijing and the Christian communities in the provinces, the imperial officials did their best to sever the links to the capital. Soldiers posted at the city gates, and along the chief highways of the entire Qing empire, were instructed to search for Christian symbols, in order to curtail the flow of books and missionaries into Zhili and beyond.<sup>98</sup>

The imperial edict of 1811 had been intended for the whole of the empire, though its immediate impact was most acutely felt in the imperial capital Beijing. Despite the grave warnings by the imperial administration, the persecution was not carried out with equal ardour in all provinces. Reports sent to the missionaries of the Propaganda Fide<sup>99</sup> suggest that they had but a very limited effect on the areas outside Beijing. Within the imperial capital mainly members of the Manchurian elite and military (*tartari*) were targeted: Banner troops had to abjure from Christianity under the constant threat of decapitation or at least of deportation to the Far West of the Qing empire (Yili). The imperial government made a public statement out of the soldiers’ apostasies by forcing the men with the cangue around their necks to march to

---

provincial missions. It should be kept in mind that the average duration for the delivery of a letter between Europe and China was two years, and often exceeded this period.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibidem*, ff. 11-12.

<sup>97</sup> Referring to Gabrielle Dufresse, in particular. *Ibidem*, f. 11 R.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 12 R.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. APF SC, series III, *Cina e Regni Adiacenti* (1806-1811), folium 401R - a letter by Emmanuele Conforti, who suspected that a secret order had been issued by the emperor, who may have feared a backlash by the populous Christian communities ( ... *qualque rivoluzione per il gran numero di cristiani*).

<sup>101</sup> The Nanyang community, in south-west Henan, was one of the most thriving centres of Christianity in Central China, and had become a refuge for Christians from the surrounding provinces. A later persecution claimed the life of the French Vincentian Francis-Régis Clet, strangled at Wuchang in February 1820. On both, see Huc, *Souvenirs of a Journey*, vol. I, p. 37.

reported cases of “propagating heresy and congregating disciples” (*xi-chuan xiejiao, zhuanchuan tuzhong* 宣傳邪教, 聚眾傳教). The memorial focuses on Liu Fangji, and the group of fellow Christians around him. Qishan was dismissive of any mitigating circumstances - such as the filial devotion to his ancestors’ practices - and referred to the Christians mentioned in the report throughout as “criminals” (fan 犯).<sup>103</sup> A letter from the year 1815 is even more scathing in its tone of condemnation. The official Guang Baoqin refers to the fugitive elder Zhang Dapeng 張大朋 and his band of fifty disciples as “treacherous, criminal aliens, intent on causing chaos” (*wailai jianfei, xitu hunji* 外來奸匪, 異土混跡). The punishment for “sowing confusion among the ignorant masses” (*shanhuo minyu* 煽惑民愚) could be nothing but harsh.<sup>104</sup>

While China’s Christians were suffering from the consequences of the latest persecutions, the European missionaries began to reflect on the factors contributing to missionary failure. The entire world mission was rife with rivalry, amongst the different orders themselves and between the Vatican and Europe’s monarchs, on subjects ranging from theological doctrine to financial matters.<sup>105</sup> The report by Emmanuele Conforti provides a detailed picture of the China mission at the beginning of the nineteenth century - including the fissures created by the perennial tension between the individual orders. Conforti also addressed the issue surrounding the

---

<sup>102</sup> 宣統元年五月二日奉旨諭旨。欽此。This edict of JQ 25/3/20, i.e. 2 May 1820 is reprinted in Zhang Ze, *Qingdai jinjiaoqi de tianzhujiao*, pp. 198-199.

<sup>103</sup> The memorial by Qishan 祁世安 dates from JQ 24/7/12, i.e. 1/9/1819. It can be consulted at the FHA, scroll 8875, original document 2750, sub-number 8, frames 1953 - 1954. An impression of Qishan as a weathered official-in-exile in Tibet we obtain in E. Huc, *Souvenirs of a Journey*, volume II, p. 259 ff. Visibly more tolerant towards Huc and Gabet as Christian foreigners, the eminent official vents his indignation against their travel companion, a Mongolian from Gansu province. See *ibidem*, volume I, p. 263.

<sup>104</sup> Cf. the memorial by Guang Bao 廣保, JQ 20/92/19, i.e. 29/3/1815, FHA, scroll 8876, original document 2763, sub-number 19, frame 2205.

Christian community of Zhaojiazhuang 茌平 in Zhili province, one of the most notorious examples of missionary discord of the entire eighteenth century. The first half of the century was dominated by parochial infighting between priests representing the Iberian crowns and the Propaganda, respectively. This period came to an end when, on 26 September 1747, the three competitors for supremacy in the town agreed that Zhaojiazhuang was to be exclusively administered by the Jesuits, while leaving the Iberian Franciscan missionaries the right of sojourn in times of persecution. The latter would otherwise concentrate their missionary activities on the surrounding districts. The complex arrangement produced constant misinterpretations, in particular after the Jesuit order had been disbanded, which necessitated a detailed map showing the precise delineations of the missionary regions in Shandong - the very map which happened to be discovered in the luggage of the missionary Adeodato.<sup>106</sup> After the ominous incident, when the Chinese Christians of the municipality were interrogated, the question of missionary affiliation was raised by the Qing officials. When questioned as to why a certain priest had never set foot in the church erected by the Portuguese, he responded that he had been baptised by missionaries belonging to the Propaganda Fide and that he had always received his sacraments from this group. After attempts to convince the local Christians to attend the Portuguese church failed to lead to concrete results, the bishop attempted to coerce leading Christians to attend services in churches other than that of the Propaganda, which set the chain of events

---

<sup>105</sup> Boxer devotes a whole chapter on the strife between the Franciscan and Jesuit missionaries in Japan. See C. R. Boxer, *The Christian Century in Japan*, pp. 137-187.

<sup>106</sup> This was spelt out in the missive by Giovanni Antonio de Pompejana, dated *Henceu* 29 October 1806. Cf. APF SC, series III, *Cina e Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811., folium 176 V. He referred to the province as “always divided ..., full of dissent, discord and preoccupations disregarding the spiritual needs of the poor Christians” (... *questa Provincia divisa ... sempre piena di dissenzioni, discordie e pretensioni sciocche, con non poccho pregiudizio spirituale de poveri christiani...*).

into motion which would result in the policy of repression starting in 1805.<sup>107</sup> Another letter, despatched from Macau to the Bishop of Beijing in the year 1806, stated the reasons with clarity and in despair - the lack of a coordinated missionary policy and a general lack of unity between the messengers of the Gospel to the Chinese:

Oh povera Missione di Pekino! Chi fù la causa della tua perdizione? Gli Europei. E perchè? Per mancanza di carità e d'unione.<sup>108</sup>

In brief, the late Jiaqing period can be regarded as a uniquely hostile episode in the development of relations between the imperial state and China's Christian communities. The growing pressure on Christian groups coincided with a campaign to put an end to the White Lotus uprisings of the last few years of the eighteenth century, and culminated around the Eight Trigrams uprising of 1813, which put the state on the defensive against all other non-orthodox religious movements. Philosophising in the aftermath of the White Lotus rebellion, the Jiaqing emperor concluded that force had been necessary in order to pacify society. Force without education, however, appeared to have little permanent effect. For this reason, the emperor concluded that the level of "orthodoxy" amongst the common people had to be raised and that "heretical"

---

<sup>107</sup> This letter was sent to the Propaganda by Emmanuele Conforti and is kept at the APF as file SC, series III, *Cina e Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, folium 401 R. See also the APF document SC, series III, *Cina e Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, ff. 223-226, containing a protest note by the ex-Jesuits of Beijing against the imminent acquisition of the Jesuit fund by the Lazarists deposited with the English in Madras. The letter was sent from Pondicherry, southern India, on 21 May 1804.

<sup>108</sup> "O poor mission of Beijing! What was the reason for your downfall? The Europeans. And why? Because of a lack of charity and unity". Letter by Joseph Nunez Ribeira to Beijing, 1806, filed at the APF as SC, *Indie Orientali/Cina*, 1806-1811, ff. 16-17. There is, however, also clear evidence for a gradual rapprochement between the various orders. Emmanuele Conforti (in APF SC, series III, *Cina e Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, folium 402 R) stated that the shock waves of the - implicitly anti-clerical - revolution in France convinced many to overcome the trenches of sectarian division, both in Europe and in the China mission. See also B. Mensaert, "Les Franciscains au service de la Propagande dans la Province de Pékin 1705-1785", in: *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* LI (1958), pp. 161-200 and 273-311.

movements, whether of Christian or Buddhist provenance, be monitored.<sup>109</sup> The official policy to contain Christianity was, however, never homogeneously applied over the whole of the empire, and was preoccupied with eradicating the presence of foreign missionaries within the imperial frontiers. Consequently, China's Christians enjoyed proportionally greater security the more their link with the outside world was severed. This tendency had reached its symbolic climax with the closure of the last remaining missionary residence in the capital during the final year of the Jiaqing period (year twenty-five, i.e. 1820), and the destruction of the Northern Cathedral in 1826. Certainly not a reason for the European missionaries to celebrate, the late Jiaqing years were seen by some as the most pitiful state the mission could possibly be in. The events did indeed mark the absolute end of the first foreign missionary presence in Beijing, but the removal of easily recognisable outsiders also rendered China's Christians a less visible target of the state's zeal to expunge heresy. With this in mind, we will now approach the development of indigenous Christianity during the last two decades prior to the reimmersion of Western missionaries.

### ***5. Relaxation of anti-Christian state action during the Daoguang period***

When the Daoguang 道光 emperor (1821-1851) succeeded to the throne, he followed the prohibitive policies of his predecessors in principle, yet proved more tolerant in practice. Instead of centrally ordained persecutions, the new emperor stressed that as long as they were of no harm to the surrounding populace and followed the laws of the dynasty, Christians were free to continue with their religious

---

<sup>109</sup> Cf. de Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution*, pp. 378-832, commenting on the *Xiejiao shuo* 邪教說 “Discourse on Heretical Religions”).

traditions.<sup>110</sup> This newly formulated tolerance did not, of course, extend to foreign missionaries, who were still subject to the edicts barring them from entering the empire. Of the court missionaries, only a handful had survived the severity of the Qianlong and Jiaqing years.<sup>111</sup> By the sixth year of the Daoguang period, all foreigners bar Pereira had either left the capital or died. For the Christian localities which had previously depended on the court missionaries and their Chinese fellow Christians, the demise of a foreign presence in the capital translated into even less protection from the anti-heretical instincts of district magistrates, whose punitive action was not only sanctioned by the legal canon of the dynasty, but was indeed fully supported by a significant proportion of imperial ministers.<sup>112</sup> A case in point was the trial against the Chinese priest Liu Ruiting 劉瑞庭 of Quxian 屈縣, a district in the eastern half of Sichuan, who stood accused of taking his religion into the homes of ordinary villagers in the north of the empire.<sup>113</sup> The legal action had been launched by an official, who had in turn been tipped off by a Christian involved in a dispute with a Christian fellow-villager, and subsequently with P. Liu after he had taken sides against the former. The intrigue triggered a formal investigation into the state of Christianity in Tianjin, Zhili Province, the region encompassing the Christian stronghold of Zhaojiawan 趙家灣, where the dispute had taken place. The chief person held responsible for spreading the “heresy” - and one of the twenty-seven recognised Chinese priests in the empire - Liu Ruiting, was executed by yamen officials through strangulation, the standard punishment for leaders of heretical movements. The severity of punishment, combined with the economic hardship encountered by the

---

<sup>110</sup> See Zhang Ze, *Qingdai jinjiaoqi de tianzhujiao*, p. 209.

<sup>111</sup> See Huc, *Souvenirs of a Journey*, volume I, p. 38.

<sup>112</sup> Cf. D. Bodde, *Law in Imperial China*, introduction.

<sup>113</sup> Cf. APF SOCP, *Indie Orientali*, 1817, ff. 15 - 16.



Christians in the north-western provinces, acted as a strong deterrent to proselytisation. A letter sent to the Propaganda offices in November 1811 illustrates the problem missionaries - Chinese and Europeans - faced in Shanxi and Shaanxi. Chinese missionaries, educated at the Chinese Institute in Naples, had prepared themselves for the China mission, but proved themselves reluctant to enter such a hostile environment. We learn that for this reason a seminary in Shanxi province had to be closed.<sup>114</sup> One of these Chinese missionaries was a graduate of the college in Naples, (Jacob) Li Zibiao (1755-1828), a native of Gansu province. Having re-entered China as an interpreter on the Macartney mission in 1793, Li Zibiao adopted the European name of *Jacob May* and continued to work with great success for the Shanxi mission. Li Zibiao was generally regarded as a very “reliable” priest, judged capable by Western missionaries of reaching higher offices than in actual fact available to Chinese natives at the time.<sup>115</sup> While not doubting his qualities as a teacher of the Christian faith, a cautious examination of his “reliability” was deemed appropriate. Owing to his doctrinal background, as a product of the college for Chinese Christians in Naples, Li Zibiao seems to have been regarded as sufficiently cured from the “superstitions” of his native lands. The source is indicative of Western reluctance to accept the growth of a native clergy. Citing “objective” reasons for the retention of European priests, such as knowledge of Latin, Europe’s Catholic missions legitimised their control of clerical life in the Chinese mission field.<sup>116</sup>

---

<sup>114</sup> Cf. APF SOCP, *Indie Orientali*, 1817, folium 15 V.

<sup>115</sup> Cf. B. Willeke, “The Report of the Apostolic Visitation”, p. 214.

<sup>116</sup> This patronising attitude of European missionaries was already criticised by the “troublemaker” Philip Huang, who highlighted discrimination against Chinese-born missionaries trained in Naples, ranging from underpayment to verbal abuse, in his letters to Rome. See Giacomo di Fiore, *Lettere di Missionari dalla Cina*, p. 109. In the meantime, Chinese missionaries were becoming active: The untiring Maurus Li managed to keep the Sichuan mission alive during the outgoing eighteenth century, whereas one generation later the Protestant convert Liang Fa 梁發 (1789-1855) successfully proselytised in his native Guangdong. Liang Fa and his “Good Words to Admonish the Age” (*Quanshi*

One interesting side-effect of the policy of banishing Christians to Yili was the development of a large Christian community in the city, complete with four churches and four seminaries, clerics from Sichuan and Shaanxi to administer the former, and the freedom to congregate for mass. During the uprisings of the early 1820s in the northwest of the Qing empire, the local Christian population assisted the Qing magistrate in repelling the Muslim rebels.<sup>117</sup> In recognition of this fact, the Daoguang emperor declared a general amnesty for the banished Christians. These punishments were however still meted out against Christian communities in Guizhou, where, protected by its remoteness and aided by missionaries from neighbouring Sichuan, Christianity had been able to develop relatively unhindered throughout the eighteenth century. In two separate movements, during the years 1822 and 1835, state officials concentrated on identifying Christian village leaders, and on punishing the most notorious perpetrators of heretical missionary activity. Capital punishment and banishment apart, the yamen gaolers resorted to the bamboo cane and to carving and branding equipment, which also served to identify troublemakers once the trial was over. In the case of the Christian Liu Wenyan 劉文淵 of Zhouxian 州縣 in Guizhou Province, the words “Christian Heresy” (*Tianzhu xiejiao* 天主邪教) had been incised into his face during the earlier persecution of 1822. When thirteen years later, during another period of repression, the same Christian intended to protect his children from the officials, a yamen clerk recognised him as a Christian due to his facial scars. Apart from arresting the whole family, the clerk furthermore added insult

---

*liangyan* 梁衍) are introduced in P. Richard Bohr, “Liang Fa’s Quest for Moral Power”, in: Barnett and Fairbank, *Christianity in China*, pp. 35-46 as well as in George Hunter McNeur, *Leung Faat (Leang Afa): The First Chinese Protestant Evangelist*, Guangzhou: Church of Christ in China 1930.

<sup>117</sup> See D. C. K. Boulger, *The Life of Yakoo Beg*, London: W. H. Allen 1878, pp. 236-257 for a detailed account of the uprising (though not confirming any cooperation between the two religious communities). See also p. 291, footnote 18 of this thesis.

to (physical) injury by having “Leading Children Astray” (*kuangpian youtong* 拐騙幼童) and “Confusing the People through Criminal Beliefs” (*zuodao huozhong* 左道惑眾) incised on Liu Wenyan’s right and left cheek, respectively.<sup>118</sup>

Whereas the capital city became increasingly perilous to its Christian population, the Christian communities of Xiwanzi 喜望子, beyond the Great Wall to the north-west of the capital (Inner Mongolia), the Black Water Valley (*Heishuichuan* 黑水川, *Hara-Wussu* in Mongolian, the Lazarist mission being situated in the village of Gulitu 固力图)<sup>119</sup> and of Anjiazhuang 安家庄 in Ansu District 安肅縣, Zhili Province, not only constituted safe havens but also became the gestation ground for the coming phase of missionary expansion during the nineteenth century.<sup>120</sup> These centres of Christian activity outside the city walls of Beijing became veritable oases for believers who, in the capital, had been deprived of the opportunity to live according to the teachings of their community. Following the excesses of the persecution of 1805, the bishop of Beijing, Alexandre Gouvea, exempted the members of the remaining congregations from the task of attending mass regularly - with the exception of Christmas, Easter, Pentecost and Assumption,

---

<sup>118</sup> Cited in Zhang Ze, *Qingdai jinjiaoqi de tianzhujiao*, pp. 210-211. The case is mentioned in the *Daqing xuanzong cheng huangdi shilu* 大清宣宗成皇帝實錄 (“Veritable records of the Daoguang emperor”), for the year DG 14 (1834).

<sup>119</sup> See Huc, *Souvenirs of a Journey*, volume I, pp. 43-44 for further details; *ibidem*, Appendix J explains the origins of the Lazarist mission of Makiatze in the Mongolian *Birin-Gol* (Bieliegou 貝列古, i.e. “Contiguous Straits”) valley.

<sup>120</sup> Huc, *Souvenirs of a Journey*, volume I, pp. 34-37 and 43-44. An enlightening reference to a non-Christian religious village community in the Dongan 東安 district, between Tianjin and Beijing, is made by de Groot. This non-Christian village of Lixin 立新 “numbered over one hundred families, who worked with cymbals and drums, exorcisms, and written or painted charms; they held meetings attended by both sexes collected moneys, and had heads and leaders in possession of heretical writings and prints, swords, spears and other such dangerous things.” See de Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution*, p. 495. The similarities in the terminology emphasise to what extent Christianity had by now become part of popular religious life.

the cardinal church holidays.<sup>121</sup> For the Christians in the capital, the situation was finally becoming more akin to that of their fellow Christians in the provinces: A dwindling number of foreign missionaries who were in the position to “rectify” practices deemed incompatible with Christian orthodoxy. The more time went by, the weaker the position of the missionaries became. The only remaining European in the capital, Bishop Pires Pereira, was isolated and powerless, in particular after the destruction of the Northern Cathedral (1827) and the flight of his chief pillar among Beijing’s native Christians, the Lazarist Pater Xue Madou 雪馬道 (Matthew Xue, *alias* Sui Madou 蘇馬道), into the rough terrain around Xiwanzi.<sup>122</sup> Pires Pereira’s death in 1838 deprived the Board of Mathematics of the last foreign official, and hence of the last opportunity to influence the emperor and high-ranking bureaucrats in favour of Christianity.<sup>123</sup> But the links with the thriving Christian exclaves of the Xiwanzi and Anjiazhuang preserved Beijing’s Christians as members of a wider religious movement, which had learnt to rely on the almost exclusive spiritual and practical guidance of half a dozen Chinese priests.<sup>124</sup> The 1820s and 1830s also experienced localised persecutions in Xi’an and in the Central China Plain. Despite

---

<sup>121</sup> Cf. APF source SC, series III, *Cina e Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, f. 163.

<sup>122</sup> Huc, *Souvenirs of a Journey*, volume I, pp. 3-4 has an account - supplied by the editor J.-M. Planchet - of the development of the Xiwanzi community. From 1828 until 1847, this village also became the nerve centre of the French mission to the Chinese capital, independent from the Portuguese administration located at the *Nantang* in Beijing. The spiritual affairs of the community were largely uninfluenced by European missionaries, but from 1835 until 1842 the French Lazarist Joseph Martial Mouly (Meng Zhensheng 孟振生) assumed the eminent role of Vicar Apostolic. Mouly was consecrated as Bishop (of Fussulan) in Honggouzi 洪溝子 (Shanxi) in July 1842, and four years later Vicar Apostolic of Beijing - a position he had retained when he was able to restore the French mission in Beijing in 1868. Mouly, Vicar Apostolic of Beijing and North Zhili from 1856-1868, was buried in the Zhengfusi 鄭夫子 cemetery within the new *Beitang*, the reconstruction of which he had supervised in person. See Huc, *Souvenirs of a Journey*, volume I, p. 3, note 4.

<sup>123</sup> Cf. Zhang Ze, *Qingdai jinjiaoqi de tianzhujiao*, pp. 214-216.

<sup>124</sup> The six priests were strengthened by the successive presences of Mouly (1835-1842), Joseph Gabet (1837-1842), Evarist-Regis Huc (1841-1842), Florent Daguin (1843, died in Kulitu in 1859) and Joseph Carayon (1843, died in Henan in 1848). In addition to Xie Madou and John-Chrysostom Kho (Chinese name unknown) there were four secular priests. See Huc, *Souvenirs of a Journey*, volume I, p. 39. On the development of the concept of secular priests in the China mission, see F. Margiotti, *Il cattolismo nello Shansi*, p. 292 ff.

the relative relaxation of the situation for China's Christian population, the threat to foreign missionaries was as imminent as ever. This was exemplified as late as in 1840, with the arrest and execution of P. Perboyre (Dong Wenxue 董文雪, a missionary belonging to the Congregation de la Mission. The priest had entered the mainland through Macau in 1835, and travelled as far as Nanyang 南洋 in Henan Province, relying on the courage of the Christians of Hubei and Henan to defy the ban on receiving foreign missionaries in their homes. Having been informed upon by an apostate, the magistrate of Wuchang 武昌 acted swiftly in arresting the European, and had him crucified and executed through strangulation.<sup>125</sup>

The starting point for an organised transfer of missionaries into the territory of the Qing empire can be set in 1829, when the Order of St Vincent (*Congregatio Missionis*) decided to send Chinese novices to France in order to undergo spiritual confirmation and missionary training. Simultaneously, more than thirty novices from the Vincentian seminaries in Macau were being prepared for missionary service - two of whom arrived in Beijing shortly after the departure of the Chinese Lazarist Xue Madou in order to assist the remaining three Chinese priests. The ageing Lazarist administrator of the Beijing diocese and nominal Bishop of Nanjing, Gaetano Pires Pereira, lived long enough to witness the arrival of the Portuguese priest Jean de Franca Castro e Moura in 1831. When seven years later, on 2 November 1838, Pereira died,<sup>126</sup> Castro e Moura (Chinese surname Zhao 赵) remained in the capital until in

---

<sup>125</sup> The "martyrdom" of the CM missionary produced an avalanche of hagiographic writings in the Catholic press. For more information concerning the last years of the missionary, see for instance A. Milon, *Mémoires de la Congrégation de la Mission*, Paris: [Congrégation de la Mission] 1912, pp. 572-580. Perboyre's execution paradoxically also marks the beginning of a new area of openness towards missionaries from the West. The missionary zeal of the Lazarist priest E.-R. Huc (Gu Bocha 郭伯察) was fired when he learned of his countryman's death upon his arrival in Macau shortly after the event. See Huc, *Souvenirs of a Journey*, volume I, p. iii.

<sup>126</sup> Pires Pereira, tolerated by the authorities due to his age, was buried by the Russian Mission. See Huc, *Souvenirs of a Journey*, volume I, p. 146, note 1.

1846 the new international situation had made a permanent foreign missionary presence in the capital possible once again.<sup>127</sup> By 1838, the delineations of twelve bishoprics had been fixed by the Vatican - primarily with the intention of filling the gaps left behind by the decades of prohibition, but also in order to pre-empt the ever-expanding north-European Protestants from establishing a privileged missionary presence. Following Pereira's death, the *Propaganda* and individual Catholic orders appointed a series of European missionaries to take up office as vicars apostolic.<sup>128</sup> The thriving Christian communities in the provinces of Shaanxi and Sichuan had already been assigned two capable bishops: Giuseppe Rizzolati (Li Wenxiu 李文秀) in 1831 for Shaanxi and Jacques Leo Perocheau (Chinese surname Ma 马) for Sichuan in the year 1838.<sup>129</sup> The following two years saw the appointment of Alexis Rameaux (Zhang Daoyuan 张大元) in 1838 for the Jiangnan provinces of Jiangxi and Zhejiang, of Emmanuel J. Fr. Verrolles (Fang Jige 方吉格) in the same year for Manchuria and Liaodong, of Gioacchino Salvetti, replacing Rizzolati as the vicar apostolic for Shaanxi, who had been assigned the new role of vicar apostolic over the Huguang double-province, and of Lodovico Conte de Besi (Luo Leisi 罗雷西, *alias* Luo Boji 罗波吉, 1805-1871), both as the vicariate apostolic for the newly formed diocese of Shandong (3 September 1839) and as bishop of Nanjing (19 December 1839).<sup>130</sup> The aftermath of the Opium War saw the creation of the British Crown Colony of Hong Kong, which fortified the position of the foreign missionaries and Chinese Christians in the Cantonese province alike. The period also

---

<sup>127</sup> See Huc, *Souvenirs of a Journey*, volume I, pp. 1-3 and 34-35.

<sup>128</sup> Including the young Mouly, who illegally entered the Christian community in Xiwanzi. See A. Milon, *Mémoires de la Congrégation de la Mission*, pp. 575-579.

<sup>129</sup> The earlier period of missionary activity in the province (up to 1738) is extensively covered in F. Margiotti, *Il cattolicesimo nello Shansi*.

<sup>130</sup> For dates and biographical information, see Zhao Qingyuan, *Zhongguo tianzhujiao jiaoku huafen*, pp. 31-33.

witnessed an increasingly sophisticated network of Catholic representation throughout the empire. This pattern of smaller dioceses being carved out of larger bishoprics could first be observed in 1831, when Korea was separated from the diocese of Beijing - an organisational move repeated in 1839 for Shandong and in 1840 for Mongolia and Manchuria.<sup>131</sup> In parallel fashion, the provinces of Jiangxi and Zhejiang were created as separate ecclesiastical units in 1846, the same year in which Guizhou and Tibet<sup>132</sup> were carved out of the Sichuanese diocese, and two years after Henan had been separated from the bishopric of Nanjing. All of the new appointments were, as a matter of course, given to Europeans, reversing the tendency towards greater - in many cases exclusive - participation of Chinese clerics in Church administration of the preceding decades. Out of the twelve dioceses created in 1838, all but four had sanctioned the presence of Chinese clerics. To the Christians of the time, this development seemed to present additional protection rather than a loss of sovereignty. It bolstered those elements of the Christian population which had demonstrated a much bolder attitude towards the imperial state during the later 1830s. Following the news that the Jesuit order had been re-established by Papal decree in 1814, Christians from “old congregations” in China wrote petitions to the emperor, begging for the appointment of missionaries as officials at court. A group of Beijing Christians went one step further and directed their plea to the newly elected Pope Gregory XVI (1832-1846). It is rather remarkable that the spokesman of this group, Boermingxiang’a

---

<sup>131</sup> The two separate vicariates were created in August 1840, after they had been severed from Beijing two years earlier by papal decree. Mouly thus succeeded Verolles of the Missions Etrangères as Vicar Apostolic over Mongolia. See Huc, *Souvenirs of a Journey*, volume I, p. 42 and Ch. Dallet, *Histoire de l'Eglise de Corée*, volume 1, pp. 26-82 for developments in Korea.

<sup>132</sup> A church had already been erected by the Capuchins Joseph de Asculi and Francis de la Tour as early as 1706. Following the expulsion of all Western nationals from Tibet in 1790, however, the mission all but disappeared. In March 1846, the Vicariate of Tibet was granted exclusively to the Missions Etrangères. See E. Huc, *Souvenirs of a Journey*, volume II, p. 279, note 1, and *ibidem* pp. 435-436.

□□□□□□□□ happened to be a member of the imperial clan, thus defying the stringent prohibitions against Christianity among Bannermen.<sup>133</sup>

In brief, during the 1830s and the early 1840s the Christian communities in China were showing signs of increasing self-confidence. As the effects of the Opium War only made themselves felt later in the decade, this development should be seen as largely unconnected to the growing military presence of the new European powers, France and Britain, in southern China. Most of the missionary work during this period was carried out by Chinese Christians, with European clerics either being too old and infirm or too intimidated by the potential consequences to play a dominant role. Only in the years after 1838 could a significant increase in the number of foreign missionaries be observed. Hence, when the sequence of imperial edicts against Christianity was finally rescinded in 1844, the number of Christians throughout the empire had reached the level of the late Kangxi years (exceeding two hundred thousand) with only marginal support from ecclesiastic structures outside China.<sup>134</sup> These numbers should be treated as approximations, as Christianity had become a very rural religion during the decades of prohibition, and the majority of China's Christians lived in remote or inaccessible areas.

The relationship between the Chinese state and Christianity was put on a entirely new basis following the treaty between France and China in 1844, which expressly entitled French missionaries to erect churches in the five treaty ports established after the Opium War. On the penultimate day of the same year, the Daoguang emperor proclaimed that the century of repression of Christianity had come

---

<sup>133</sup> See Zhang Ze, *Qingdai jinjiaoqi de tianzhujiao*, p. 215.

<sup>134</sup> Zhang Ze, *Qingdai jinjiaoqi de tianzhujiao*, p. 218 quotes 220,000 Christians for the year 1836, Zhao Qingyuan, *Zhongguo tianzhujiao jiaoqu huafen*, p. 30 estimates 210,000 believers for the year 1815. Diverging numbers concerning Catholic clerics are given, with Zhang Ze quoting forty foreign as



to an end. In a somewhat defensive justification of the prohibitive policy, the edict was justified by the claim that certain Chinese subjects had sought to “avail themselves to religion in order to ‘do wrong’”, and that the intention had not been to ban Christianity as such.<sup>135</sup> Little more than one year later, a second imperial edict instructed the magistrates to respect Christians as morally upright people, who had nothing in common with the followers of other heterodox beliefs. Hence the imperial request to discontinue all official investigations - except when cases of insurrection of nominal Christians were suspected:

Those practising Christianity ought to be spared from prosecution, those who set up places of prayer in order to worship, as well as the use of crucifixes, icons and statues, sutras, recitals need not be prosecuted... Those who hold wicked beliefs or collude with people from afar who spread wicked rumours, or bandits who use the name of Christianity in order to cheat should all be regarded as treacherous criminals. Their names ought to be obtained, and they should all be tried according to the appropriate regulations. As before, foreigners will not be allowed to enter the interior in order to propagate Christianity ... .

Though the edict cleared the way for the re-establishment of Christianity in Beijing, missionary activity beyond the capital area and the treaty ports was still to be

---

opposed to eighty native missionaries, and Zhao Qingyuan offering a proportion of eighty-nine Chinese priests compared with eighty foreign ones for 1815.

<sup>135</sup> The memorial by Qiying 祁慶衍 of DG 25 (1845) quoted frequent objections by foreign (French and Russian) representatives concerning the continued discrimination against Christianity. The memorial emphasised that “[because] Christianity urged people to lead an upright life, it could not be regarded as heresy; for this reason the ban against Christianity ought to be rescinded” (基督教勸人向善，不能視為異端，因此禁教之令應予撤銷) (基督教勸人向善，不能視為異端，因此禁教之令應予撤銷). See Wang Zhichun, *Qingchao rouyuan ji*, p. 251. An earlier edict of DG 24, i.e. 1844 already stated that “every Chinese who practised a religion ought to be punished if found in the pursuit of evil, though this does not apply to those practising foreign religions” (凡中國人習教，若尋常為惡，雖習教亦應受罰，惟尋常為惡，不習教者不在此限) (凡中國人習教，若尋常為惡，雖習教亦應受罰，惟尋常為惡，不習教者不在此限). Cited in Zhang Ze, *Qingdai jinjiaoqi de tianzhujiao*, p. 222.

outlawed for another fifteen years.<sup>136</sup> The reluctance of the Qing administration to close its eyes to religious movements labelled as "Christian" is vividly demonstrated in a memorial of the year 1851. The memorial decries the contacts between Christians in Sichuan province with those in the capital and with the "English aliens" (*ying-yi* 英夷) from Guangdong province - a reference highlighting the growing importance of Hong Kong in commercial and missionary matters.<sup>137</sup> Christians in all localities were so encouraged that they, once again, displayed their belief by publicly posting Christian symbols on their doorposts (*menpai* 門牌). Possession of printed scriptures and pamphlets (*shuji xinzhai* 書經新載) was getting increasingly commonplace. In the meantime, sectarian movements were proliferating all over eastern China. One such "heretical sect", whose leader referred to himself as the "Great Celestial King", *tian dawang* 天大王, was gaining adherents for his "Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace" (*Taiping tianguo* 太平天國) so rapidly that fast action was required.<sup>138</sup> With the interior in open revolt, and the influence of the

---

<sup>136</sup> See the *zhupi* 御批 by the Daoguang emperor of DG 26/1/25 (1846) in Appendix 3 (cited in Zhang Ze, *Qingdai jinjiaoqi de tianzhujiao*, p. 224).

<sup>137</sup> The memorial is by Pan Duo 潘多, with the date XF 1/4/2, (1851). See FHA, scroll 8875, original document 2751, sub-number 9, frames 1955-1959. See also the follow-up to the investigation, in FHA, scroll 8875, original document 2751, sub-number 10, frames 1960-1962, composed three days later.

<sup>138</sup> The Taiping leader Hong Xiuquan would have denied any "rebellious" intentions, in the belief of merely executing the will of God (*shangdi* 上帝). See Wagner, *Reenacting the Heavenly Vision*, pp. 36, 67-81 and 115 (on the significance of "translating"/ "reenacting" his divine vision into earthly reality). For a vivid (contemporary Western) analysis of the Taiping leader see Rev. Johnson, "Tai-Ping-Wang", in: *The New Englander*, July 1871, pp. 389-407.

“Christian aliens” growing year by year, however, the Qing government found decisive action ever more impossible.

## **Chapter 8: The perplexed official: Christianity as heterodox mystery**

Whereas the preceding chapter provided a chronological structure for the period under discussion, the remainder of the third part is devoted to an analysis of the phenomenon from three different angles. Chapters nine and ten will focus on the perception of Christianity as a menace to the established order, first seen against the background of internal rebellions, then as a consequence of the changing international situation. The topic of the present eighth chapter, however, will be the intellectual universe of the investigating official. How did a county magistrate understand the world of popular religion? To which degree was his Confucian background relevant to the analysis of sectarian developments? And finally, what can we learn from the official terminology employed for the description of sectarians and their cultic rituals and objects? The answers to these questions will, in the final analysis, contribute to a better understanding of the process of Christianity’s inculturation - interpreted through the eyes of the eighteenth century magistrate.

### 1) *Common elements in the description of heresy in official documents*

“Religious scriptures, one box of sacrificial oil, a small white garment, one necklace.” This is the official description of the contents of a briefcase used by a missionary operating in the Shanghai area in the year 1823.<sup>1</sup> Reports by officials involved in action against Christian groupings abound in descriptions of sacramental objects used by China’s underground Christians. Terms such as “liturgical registers” (*danlidan* 檀煉單), icons (*tu* 圖) and statues (*xiang* 像), candles (*zhu* 柱), incense (*xiang* 香), rosaries (*nianzhu* 念珠)<sup>2</sup> and sacred writings (*jingjuan* 經卷) were recognisable to officials who had never concerned themselves with anything Christian, as they formed routine components of Buddhist ritual. Objects exclusively pertaining to Christian communities, such as the crucifix (*shizijia* 十字架) or specific Christian writings, e.g. the “True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven” (*Tianzhu shiyi* 天主十義) escaped the familiarity of the religious landscape, and added an air of mystery to official investigations.

#### a) *Christianity as the heterodox unknown*

Though the vast majority of official inquiries focused on popular expressions of Christianity, there is some evidence that the Jesuits’ efforts among the literati had yielded lasting results during the eighteenth century. The epigraphs composed by He Shenhai 何申海, grade nine official and respected intellectual of Sichuanese extraction, remind us of Christianity’s remaining vigour - and of its ongoing inculturation into the cultural fabric of late imperial China, well beyond the confines of the scholar-official elite. Until his death in 1826, he remained an unrepentant

---

<sup>1</sup> The development of Christianity in the Pudong area is referred to in Ruan and Gao, *Shanghai zongjiao shi*, p. 355.



This account by a second generation Christian is revealing for the terminology chosen to represent what the author believed to be the key elements constituting a truly “Christian” identity: Images of the moon and the sun were commonly used in popular religious life, and are believed to have originated from White Lotus ideology. Expressions such as “The Upright Path” and “The Left Path” for orthodox and heretical beliefs respectively, were commonly accepted in imperial China. So was the syncretic idea of the Three Teachings (of Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism) originally forming part of one universal Truth - very directly alluded to in “the mystery of the three-in-one” - the image chosen to illustrate the concept of the Trinity.<sup>5</sup> The decision to divide the Ten Commandments into “two times five prohibitions” stems directly from the five Buddhist prohibitions, against murdering, adultery, theft, and the breaking of the fast. The fact that an “auspicious morning” is mentioned for the interment indicates that the astrological concepts of the lunar (“peasant”) calendar were common currency even among China’s Christian population. The “Teachings of the Lord of Heaven” thus encountered little fundamental resistance during the course of its inculturation. Parallels - perceived, constructed or genuine - such as the ones highlighted above, on the contrary empowered Christianity to become integrated into the contemporary religious system.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> The term Three-in-One (*san-yi* 三合一) was of course also used for the syncretic teachings of Lin Zhaoen, who in turn built on the foundations of earlier syncretistic currents. See K. Dean, *Lord of the Three in One*, p. 21.

<sup>6</sup> This assumption runs counter to theories, for instance as expressed by Nicolas Standaert for the late Ming period, emphasising the high degree of theological awareness of converts among the literati. In *Yang Tingyun*, p. 204, Standaert highlights the fact that Yang had been a member of different Buddhist benevolent societies prior to conversion - a fact which made him conscious of the differences between the two religions. See also his “Inculturation and Chinese-Christian Contacts”, p. 217, stating Standaert’s view of Yang Tingyun as “only the beginning of [Christian] inculturation in China”.

In addition to the epitaph itself, He Shenhai's son attached six poles with traditional four and five character couplets. These scrolls read: "After a Meritorious Life, Returning to the Tomb" (*shirong guimu* 尸 荣 归 墓); "The Eternal Light Shine Upon Him" (*yongguang zhaozhi* 永 光 照 祚) "Abandoning the Tomb at Resurrection the Extreme Ultimate will Reign Supreme" (*fuhuo chumu, taiji gongchao* 复 魄 除 墓, 太 极 功 朝); "It is Heaven's Will to Restrain Oneself and a Saintly Prerogative to Negate the Self" (*tianju xu ke-ji, shengyu gui wang-wu* 天 眷 徐 克 己, 圣 与 归 王 无), and finally "The Ten Commandments bring Boundless Fortune, the Seven Victories Abundant Bliss" (*shijie wuxianfu, qike youyuqi* 十 戒 无 限 福, 七 克 有 余 禧).<sup>7</sup> Once again, the author entwines accepted orthodoxy with Christian doctrine: The concept of the "Absolute" (*taiji* 太 极) has its origins in the cosmology of early Song Confucians;<sup>8</sup> the idea of moral victory through "self-restraint" (*ke-ji* 克 己) had been cultivated by Confucian literati during the eighteenth century to religious proportions, and would therefore have appeared as a very natural component of a virtuous life style.<sup>9</sup> Its Buddhist precursor, the concept of "self-denial" (*wang-wu* 忘 无, i.e. the extermination of the egoistic drive for self-preservation) figures harmoniously as part of the same couplet. Clearly Christian images are the "Eternal Light", "Heaven" and the "Resurrection". Apart from documenting the survival of Christianity within the Chinese elite, this source is revealing in another aspect: He Shenhai's interpretation of Christian theology is indicative of the degree of Christianity's inculturation. Though produced by and for a member of the literati elite, the inscription is typical of late imperial syncretism, which

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Zhang Ze, *Qingdai jinjiaoqi de tianzhujiao*, pp. 204-205.

<sup>8</sup> ... and stretches, in fact, back to the Zhou period. See Overmyer, *Precious Volumes*, p. 87.

<sup>9</sup> For a discussion of Diego Pantoja's *Seven Victories* (or "seven restraints" *Qi ke* 七 克) over sin, see B. A. Elman, *Classicism, Politics, and Kinship*, pp. 90-91.

by the outgoing eighteenth century had become deeply rooted in the “little” traditions of China’s rural population. The official language used to describe Christian as well as other types of religious movements was indeed highly similar. State officials seemed perplexed by the Christianity’s role in the world of popular religiosity. In their combination of liturgical and spiritual practice, the members of other late imperial popular religious movements, for instance the One Stick of Incense (*yizhuxiang* 一炷香), the Red Sun (*hongyang* 红阳), the Western Mahayana (*xidasheng* 西大乘) or the followers of the Emperor Lü (*lühuang* 吕皇) resembled those of the Christian community, itself known as Master of Heaven Sect (*tianzhujiao* 天主教). Theological parallels to Christianity can be found in the concepts of the Hongyang Sect (*hongyangjiao* 红阳教), combining elements such as “heaven” and “hell” with those of a “Celestial Master of the Eight Heavens” (*batian tianzhu* 八天天主) - *tianzhu* 天主, or “Celestial Master”, also being the term for the god of the Christians.<sup>10</sup>

Faithful to the traditions of popular Chinese religion, Chinese Christians also showed deep respect for the religious identity of their parents. This parallel is revealed in a memorial enumerating the “crimes” committed by the Christian commoner Li Tianyi 李天益, of Laojiazhuang 老家庄 in Zhili province. While the memorial centres on the production and distribution of statues, pictures and of scriptures, we learn that Li Tianyi stood accused of cultivating an illegal creed he held in common with his father. The memorial, composed in the year 1782, further informs us that Li Tianyi regularly undertook journeys to Beijing, in order to stock up on Christian writings and paraphernalia, which would then be distributed among his fellow

---

<sup>10</sup> See Ma Xisha and Han Binfang, *Zhongguo minjian zongjiaoshi*, pp. 507 and 918.



believers.<sup>11</sup> Nowhere in the memorial do we read anything about the precise nature of the material - the mere fact that he dared to contravene the laws of the empire was sufficient for the state administrator to act. Whether sculptures found in connection with forbidden cults were “Buddhist”, “Daoist” or “Christian” was of little immediate concern. The emphasis is on the fact that they constituted ritualistic tools utilised for prohibited sectarian activities, and that the movements which practised and spread their use had to be treated as a danger to order in the empire. Punishment of the few would serve as an example to the erring masses, and effectively protect the state from the consequences of instability. As in the case of He Shenhai’s son, there is a direct connection between Li Tianyi’s respect for the mental universe of his father and his own commitment to Christianity as a living tradition. The difference between the two cases is determined by the social and educational backgrounds of the two protagonists: While the He clan can be regarded as a typical representative of scholar officialdom, Li Tianyi’s origins are more mundane. The source reveals Li’s rural origins, though it leaves us unenlightened with regard to his intellectual training.

The uncovering of heterodox movements in the countryside was, during the eighteenth century, a familiar task for state officials. Owing to the Confucian scepticism inculcated into every prospective candidate, the intellectual elite certainly had strong reservations about the quality of unsanctioned religious devotion among the rural masses. The distinction between orthodox religious rituals and the disdained yet tolerated cults of the peasantry was, on the whole, highly artificial, since religious cults of all varieties could be found at every level of Chinese society: Buddhist and Daoist locations of worship were ubiquitous, transcending the narrow definition of

---

<sup>11</sup> The memorial by the governor general for Zhili, Mei Guang 梅光, can be inspected as FHA, scroll 9258, original document 493, sub-number 34, frame 391-392. It is dated QL 46/12/27, i.e. 9/2/1782.

“religious” function even at the level of the scholar-official elite. Worship at the temple of the city gods was considered part of the magistrates’ official duties,<sup>12</sup> while the culmination of the rites performed at court was the prayer of the emperor, the symbolic beacon of the Confucian order, at the Temple of Heaven for a bountiful harvest.<sup>13</sup> The decisive element for the classification as “heterodoxy” thus lay in the compliance of popular cults with the religious patterns set by the political elite. The religious beliefs of ignorant tillers, many officials concluded, may have been erroneous and not conducive to the preservation of law and order, but could not be regarded as malevolent moral subversion. State officials thus acted regardless of “religious” considerations, and rather judged the members of proscribed teachings as representatives of socially destabilising factors. The undiscerning attitude of state inspectors as to the precise quality of the community’s doctrine and ritual is reflected in the language used for describing seized objects and scriptures. The emphasis was firmly placed on whether or not they represented prohibited sectarian movements, and thus had to be treated as a danger to order in the empire. Lenient officials would conclude that the followers of heresy were simple, unrefined mountain folk, deluded by rumours that by following Christianity one could perfect one’s moral standards without breaking the law. An example of the latter is the high-ranking Asihā,

---

<sup>12</sup> From the Ming dynasty onwards, magistrates were to perform regular sacrifices at a local shrine (*litan* 土地祠) to the God of the Walls and Moats (*cheng-huang* 城隍, equivalent of the Roman Pluto), as well as to the “neglected spirits and ghosts” (*wusi gui-shen* 五祀鬼神). See K. C. Hsiao, *Rural China*, p. 220 ff.

<sup>13</sup> From the late Ming period onwards the rite was performed according to Daoist ritual, with the God of Heaven (“Supreme God Ruling Heaven” *huang-tian shangdi* 黃天上帝) at its focus. Members of the Confucian elite who followed the tradition of scepticism towards transcendental phenomena would thus have been tested to their limits - although the sacrificial rites were performed by Confucian officials. The “public” quality of the sacrifice seem to differ chiefly in its degree of sophistication from the theatrical performances organised for the general public. See Stephan Feuchtwang, “School-Temple and City God”, pp. 600-601, 605 and p. 762, note 12; note also the following footnote, containing remarks by the magistrate of Wei *xian* in Shandong referring to popular theatrical performances. A detailed description of the imperial cult at the Temple of Heaven can be found in E. T. Williams, “The

pondering a case of Christian “heresy” in Henan. “Their belief”, he concluded, “merely urged people to respect the Ruler of the Universe, and not to lead a debauched lifestyle.”<sup>14</sup> The Christians congregate in order to burn incense and to read aloud the scriptures.” These accusations are reminiscent of those against vegetarian societies and “incense associations” (*xianghui* 香會),<sup>15</sup> “confused” in their practices - such as fasting at home - but not necessarily “criminal”.<sup>16</sup>

---

State Religion of China during the Manchu Dynasty”, in: *Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, (new series) XLIV (1913), pp. 23-39.

<sup>14</sup> The FHA document is entitled “The Case of Christianity in Tongbo District, Henan” 河南通波縣基督教案 and is already referred to on p. 161 ff. of this thesis.

<sup>15</sup> See Susan Naquin and Chü-fang Yü, “Pilgrimage in China”, in S. Naquin and Chü-fang Yü (eds), *Pilgrimage in China*, p. 12.

<sup>16</sup> 田畝中服役，行止無虧，在家則齋，行則習其教... 但由是而謂其為犯罪人，則非也 (‘In the fields they serve as tillers and act in impeccable manner, at home they fast and practise their cults ... but by no means they are criminals’) Reprinted in the *Shiliao xunkan* 史料叢刊, section ‘Heaven’ 天, volume 2, pp. 48-50, entitled “A Luojiao Case” (洛教案, Jiangxi, 1730).

b) *Christianity as heretical subversion*

Whatever the personal inclination of the individual state official towards religion, the philosopher-statesman in the very same official demanded the extirpation of any social developments with potentially “subversive” effects on society. Lack of stability threatened both social cohesion and the legal and military security of the state. Disturbed stability grew out of disturbed minds - a consequence of the unchecked proliferation of “heretical” beliefs. As it was the effects of heresy which posed the threat - and not the beliefs as such - officials were under obligation to report on any type of un-orthodox religious movement. The routine style and vocabulary of reporting heterodox incidents underlines these conclusions: Villagers are referred to as “ignorant” (*yu* 愚) bait waiting to be lured into ideas and organisations they could not possibly comprehend. Their minds are “confused” (*hunxia* 昏 Xia), “unclear, disturbed” (*hutū* 糊), “chaotic” (*huo* 乱), “unable to awaken” (*wei-neng-xing* 不能醒) - hence the need for the strict but fatherly action of emperor and state. The hazy terminology mirrored the officials’ unclear perception of the nature of popular cults. Clutching to partial knowledge of some of the more wide-spread cults, the authorities tagged every unknown movement with qualifications that could be employed for any of the other sectarian movements.<sup>17</sup> From our documentary evidence it appears that Christianity, or at least certain elements of it, continued to be regarded favourably by most members of the eighteenth century elite. Towards the beginning of the subsequent century, however, the sources indicate a stiffening of the official stance towards popular Christianity. In the following, the factors contributing towards this perception will be distilled from representative sources.

Why did the state intensify its campaign against Chinese Christianity towards the turn of the nineteenth century? This fact can only be explained by taking into account the lure of Christian ideas on the non-educated population, and the fear of popular religious movements escaping the control of the state. At least for the early nineteenth century there is proof of certain elements of Christian practice being emulated by non-Christians, such as the use of the crucifix and of pamphlets containing spiritual commandments.<sup>18</sup> The following observations by Antonius of Calatia, with reference to his missionary field of Shanxi, further underline the tendencies favouring the mutual inculturation of Christian and other cults:

.. the Devil occupies the borderline to the divine, as an untiring imitator. Such are the practices of the Buddhist priests, who are frequently attempting to copy the rites of the Christians. The Buddhists have a certain statue for making rain,<sup>19</sup> which they clothe in their own Buddhist garb, here referred to as *jiasha* 假沙 [kasaya]. Their altars are now arranged in the same fashion as those of the Christians. Several now also have the hierarchical functions of deacon and subdeacon. Apostates have accommodated a number of litanies to the Virgin Mary by merely altering [her] proper name in order to suit them to their own idols. If we hence would want to attempt to pre-empt everything that seems to be in common with [the cults of] the idolaters, there is no doubt that we would have to abstain from many approved rites. [...] Our Christians ... obviously take delight in chanting in vocal profusion to our God, but no European missionary would detect in their hymns anything superstitious, or any reason to prohibit them.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> The followers of the *Huangtian* 皇天 as well as of the *Luo* sect 罗 were frequently the target of state prosecution. See Qin Baoqi, *Zhongguo dixia shehui*, p. 225 and D. Overmyer, *Folk Buddhist Religion*, pp. 7-11.

<sup>18</sup> After Ma Xisha and Han Bingfang, *Zhongguo minjian zongjiaoshi*, p. 1238. The reasons for choosing the title “Religion of Celestial Bamboo” (*Tianzhujiao* 天竹教, quoted in de Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution*, p. 513) for a sect active around 1830 in Henan may have been in its protective homophony with the *Tianzhujiao* for Catholicism - suggesting that Christianity was a well-established belief by this time.

<sup>19</sup> ... remembering that Shanxi and Shaanxi provinces are located in the arid north-west of China. The practice itself certainly has thus more of a local flavour than it could possibly be regarded as Buddhist.

<sup>20</sup> Antonio de Calatia, reporting from the Shanxi mission in October 1806. Cf. APF SC, series III, *Cina e Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, ff. 174 R and V. The passage has been freely translated from the following original: ... *Diabolus sit quasi divinitatis limia, seu impluribus imitator, ita est praecipia ipsius membra Bonzios inquam ritus Christianorum in multis imitari studeant; sic Bonzii sibi vestem consuerunt, hic Casa* [假沙] *vocant, quaequae pluvialis figuram habet. Nunc etiam altaria juxta Christianorum altarium exemplar disponunt. Plures etiam nunc duobus ministris in Modum Diaconi et Subdiaconi utuntur nuperrimè quidam. Apostata solo nomine mutato varios litaniarum Beatae Mariae versis ad honorem Idoli sui accommodavit. Proinde si velimus ea omnia devitare quae nobis cum*

But even during the early eighteenth century, certain officials did not refrain from branding Christianity a “heretical” religion, usually by comparing the cultic practice of the Christians and other religious groups using the same doctrinal parameters. The writings of Matteo Ripa, who visited Linqing 臨清 (Shandong province) in the early 1720s, seem to confirm this. Ripa refers to the prefect of Yanzhou fu 煙台府, who ordered the local magistrate to prevent the spread of the local Christian community. The same prefect, Ripa continues, declined to name the Christians specifically as followers of *tianzhujiao* 天主敎, reminding the magistrate that all “heretical movements” (*sette false* / *xiejiao* 邪教) should be treated along the same, uncompromising criteria. The treatment of such Christian “heretics” thus corresponded with the commonly applied measures against followers of other heterodox movements: 30 strokes of the cane (*bastonnati*) for each disciple of Christian teachings, with bribes accepted for more lenient treatment, and heavier punishment meted out in cases of non-compliance with police authority.<sup>21</sup> Most reports classifying Christians as “heretics” stem, however, from the turn of the nineteenth century. The following testimony by Antonio Luigi Landi, on the consequences of the persecutions triggered by the Adeodato affair, eighty years after the Yongzheng edict, illustrates the typical procedure of punitive action against Christian “heretics”. The key officials in the Supreme Council, we are informed, issued the imperial edict announcing measures against “all Christians, without any

---

*idolatriis communia videntur, non dubium est, quin a multis rebus licitis abstinendum sit. [...] De variis autem abusibus, ..., plovant quidam, vel si magis placet, ululant Christiani nostri ... turbamque tumultu autem in Divitum Exequiis videre est, sed cum his omnibus nulla immisceatur superstitio nullusque Missionarius Europaeus hujusmodi exequiis interesse solitus sit .. ea tolerantur.*

<sup>21</sup> See the letter by Carlo da Castorano to Matteo Ripa in Michele Fatica (ed.), *Matteo Ripa, Giornale (1705-1724), Vol. II (1711-1716)*, p. 344 ff.

difference” to all provincial governors. But instead of encompassing the entirety of the Christian community, district magistrate functionaries often preferred to apprehend individual Christians, well-known in their community. These were then subjected to torture to force the Christians to renege on their faith.<sup>22</sup> One such example was a Christian merchant from Beijing who, having visited the local community on previous occasions, was recognised and arrested at the border between the Huguang and Guangdong province. He had been expected by the *buon conduttore* (of his congregation) Mauro Li and Gioacchino Salvetti on the banks of the river forming the border between the provinces. Of Mauro Li we learn that his family had fallen victim to the persecutions of the early Jiaqing years.<sup>23</sup> As part of a major sweep-up operation aimed at eradicating support for sectarian cults in the provinces, the family members (*tutti i parenti*) of Mauro Li were arrested, led to Taiyuan-fu 太原府 and handed over to the provincial governor of Shanxi. What ensued was reminiscent of the trials against popular religious movements in general: First the “core offenders” were interrogated as to the nature of their beliefs and to find out the names of their fellow sectarians. Then neighbours and “gentiles” who were known to have been in contact with the sectarians were questioned, occasionally revealing the identity of further converts. In the case of Mauro Li’s family, we are informed that the governor was impressed by the serenity of the answers, *tanto semplice e pulite*, who stuck to their beliefs without trying to deny their allegiance to Christianity or to denigrate their

---

<sup>22</sup> Letter by A. Luigi Landi (da Signa), *Pu Huo* (Shanxi), 7 March 1806. Recorded as APF document SC, series III, *Cina and Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, folium 105: *I grandi mandarini del supremo consiglio, ..., avendo tutti uniti dato fuoro un editto ad ogni vicerè della Provincia, in virtù di cui ciascun christiano sine discrimine differentia dovera essere catturato, e sforzato anche col uso de più squisiti tormenti a rinnegere la Sancta Fede.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*, folium 106.

neighbours.<sup>24</sup> Mauro himself was later exiled to three years of slavery in Yili, while his foreign missionary friends were to be deported to Europe.<sup>25</sup>

Another clear example of the perceived educative role of the state can be found in a memorial sent by the high-ranking military officials Fusejian's 傅塞坚, Pusabao 普萨保, Guang Xing 广兴 and the veteran White Lotus opponent Eledengbao 额勒登保, in the last days of his life.<sup>26</sup> The memorial follows interrogations of soldiers in the cavalry, subordinates of the officer Tong Hengxi 童恒锡, who had stood accused of adhering to Christianity.<sup>27</sup> Defying repeated attempts by the well-wishing representatives of the imperial government to enlighten the transgressors for progress towards moral perfection, the accused Banner soldiers would “not want to know anything of changing for the better and awakening from their torpor” (*buzhi qianshan gaiwu* 不知前山改悟). Moreover, the sectarians refused to accept the generous offer by the high-ranking commanders to receive enlightenment, and thus stubbornly remained “blindly superstitious”. All fatherly benevolence having failed, the officials felt that there was no alternative to strict punishment for all clandestine Christians within the Banner.<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*, folium 106 R.

<sup>25</sup> This refers to Gioacchino Salvetti, who later returned to the China mission.

<sup>26</sup> See the memorial of 9/5/1805, by Eledengbao et al. (FHA, scroll 9260, original document 498, sub-number 39). The memorial is simply entitled with the official attributes of the Manchurian commander Eledengbao (it reads: “Eledengbao, hereditary First Class Brave, Commander of the Imperial Bodyguard and Military Governor of the Regular Blue Han Banner troops, respectfully requests to submit a truthful account ...”).  
傅勒登保等跪奏为... - thus giving the memorial all the weight deemed commensurate for dealing with the crisis.

<sup>27</sup> Literally, of “practising and studying Western religion” (*xixue xiyangjiao* 学习西洋教). The emphasis of Christianity's “foreign” quality was indicative of the changing international situation at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

<sup>28</sup> 傅勒登保等跪奏为... Eledengbao in the same memorial: “We reckon that the commander ordered them not to mend their ways. The soldiers [therefore] stubbornly clung to superstition and did not awaken to reason”.



Punitive official action was indicative of the conviction that only the state had the power and organisational strength to set parameters for doctrine. There were no religious institutions with all-embracing authority which could have challenged the claim to define the parameters of orthodoxy. Confucianism, with its emphasis on ritual, thus entitled and obliged the state to assume quasi-religious authority, as well as to educate the common people, to protect these from heretical teachings just as parents would shield their children from bad influences.<sup>29</sup> The function of state action against heresy was to protect ignorant subjects from teachings designed to lead them astray from the path of peaceful tilling. Religious groups acting without having been sanctioned by the state had to be prevented from growing into large, homogenous bodies.

For the Christian communities of the eighteenth century, a major threat arose out of the growing hostility of religious movements branded as “subversive” against the prevailing dynasty, in particular from the 1770s onwards.<sup>30</sup> Even more threatening was the fact that some “heretical” insurgents sought shelter among the relatively inconspicuous Christians, also referring to themselves as followers of a *Tianzhu jiao* 天主教. The Franciscan cleric Michael Fernández Oliver spelt out the main threat to the success of Christianity among Shandong’s peasant population:

---

<sup>29</sup> Though the struggle against superstition had been a key element of Confucian state orthodoxy from the beginnings of the imperial era, we should be very careful not to impose twentieth century definitions for concepts such as “atheism”, “superstition” and “religion” - especially when used with a materialist bias. The modern Chinese equivalents for these terms (i.e. *zongjiao* 宗教, *wushen* 无神 and *mixin* 迷信) are ultimately Western loan words introduced via the Japanese medium. See Julia Ching, *Chinese Religions*, pp. 1-9.

<sup>30</sup> For an introduction to sixteenth and seventeenth century *baojuan* composed in the *Hongyang* tradition, see D. Overmyer, *Precious Volumes*, pp. 321-343. Otherwise, see S. Naquin, *Shantung Rebellion*, p. 38 ff. and Ma Zhao, “Shilun Qianlong shiqi (1736-1796) chajin tianzhujiao shijian”, p. 23. The greatest contribution of the Yuandun movement was the publication of the Dragon Flower Sutra (*Longhua jing* 龙华经) between 1652 and 1655. See R. H. C. Shek, “Religion and Society”, pp. 287-299. The Shouyuan 寿元 sect is discussed in S. Naquin, *Shantung Rebellion*, p. 189, note 120.

... *perversos hombres, maestros de una perversa secta* ..., with the same name as ourselves. ... The villagers, whenever they hear our name mentioned, become frightened and act as much against us, more than they otherwise would, as against the genuine followers of that sect. In the province of Henan, where the sect has thousands and millions of followers, ... confessions were extracted from the followers by using threats and beatings with a ruler. I therefore request your approval to build a church in order to oppose this demonic monster.<sup>31</sup>

It is noteworthy that the term “perverse sect” is the exact translation of the legal term used by the Chinese state to describe unauthorised, heretical beliefs (*xiejiao* 邪教). The reference to the use of the “same name” of *Tianzhujiao* 天主教 is important, as - by the end of the eighteenth century - the presence of foreign missionaries had been substantially diminished. The Western imprint of Christianity had thus faded significantly, although it was still recognisable - and “mysterious” - to the investigating official. Since foreign missionaries were no longer available to offer help, religious movements which “borrowed” the name of the Christian sect could expect more lenient treatment by state officials. This fact can be regarded as one of the facets of Christianity's inculturation process: By the end of the eighteenth century, its foreign origins no longer constituted an obstacle to the communication between Christianity and other religious movements.

Christian missionaries spread the knowledge of their faith through two channels: Orally, by visiting locations situated in between their home bases and neighbouring communities, and by means of woodblock prints. Such prints would encompass works by the early Jesuit missionaries, as well as later adaptations. From

---

<sup>31</sup> See *Sinica Franciscana* VIII, p. 858. For more information on the formation and structure of the “false Catholics” as a manifestation of the White Lotus movement, see Qin Baoqi, *Zhongguo dixia shehui*, pp. 21-31 and 119-131.

the history of Buddhist publications we know that, once carved and safely stored, such woodblocks could be used over many decades for the reproduction of religious prints.<sup>32</sup> In the following, the significance of the written medium will be discussed, alongside some of the more important titles circulated by Christians during the eighteenth century.<sup>33</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> Emphasised by T. H. Barrett, in “Ignorance and the Technology of Information”, p. 25. Barrett refers to J. P. Drège, “Les aventures de la typographie et les missionnaires protestants en Chine au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle”, in: *Journal Asiatique*, CCLXXX-3/4 (1992), p. 279 ff., as well as Tsien Tsuen-hsien, volume V, part 1, Joseph Needham (ed.), *Science and Civilisation in China*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1985, “Paper and Printing”, pp. 196-251.

<sup>33</sup> Most of the listed titles have been perused for the present thesis, namely at the British Library (Oriental and India Office Collections) and at the Chinese National (Peking) Library. A thematic introduction to these titles would, however, have required significantly more space and has therefore been omitted.

## 2. “Christian sutras”

### a) *Textual Traditions in Late Imperial China*

As their Buddhist competitors had done for over fifteen centuries, the Catholic missionaries put great emphasis on the provision of written materials which could be employed for the propagation of their faith.<sup>34</sup> The Bible in its entirety would only become available once the Protestant missionaries of the early nineteenth century had entered the Chinese mission field.<sup>35</sup> To what extent, however, did the absence of a comprehensive Bible translation matter to the Chinese convert? It should firstly be remembered that the relative value of the Bible is less pronounced in the Catholic tradition than in the reformed churches, which were after all created in order to “return” to the scriptural origins of Christianity. Secondly, despite the fact that the Confucian tradition had enshrined its own classical writings (*jing* 經) into a fixed canon, there is no parallel in Chinese religious culture to the Christian concept of a divinely ordained “Alpha to Omega” - of a permanently fixed scriptural edifice which cannot be altered through human intervention.<sup>36</sup> The heterodox movements of late imperial China, on the contrary, actively added an incessant flow of religious scriptures (also referred to as *jing* 經), either Daoist texts or Buddhist sutras, to the

---

<sup>34</sup> A comprehensive bibliography of Chinese translations of European writings can be found in Henri Bernard, “Les Adaptions chinoises d’ouvrages européens: Bibliographie chronologique depuis la venue des portugais à Canton jusqu’à la mission française de Pékin, 1514-1688”, in: *Monumenta Serica: Journal of Oriental Studies of the Catholic University of Peking*, X (1945), pp. 1-57 and 309-388. H. Verhaeren’s *Catalogue de la Bibliothèque du Pé-T’ang*, Beijing: Imprimerie des Lazaristes 1949 reflects the wealth of European sources the Jesuit translators could draw on.

<sup>35</sup> See Marshall Broomhall, *The Bible in China*, pp. 50-97. *The Bible in China* was published to commemorate the 120th anniversary of Robert Morrison’s translation of the New Testament. Preceding the first full Bible translation to appear in China - *Shentian shengshu* 聖經 (‘Divine heaven’s sacred scripture’), 1823, by R. Morrison and W. Milne - was J. Marshman’s version published after 1815 in India. See also W. W. Moseley, *The Origins of the First Protestant Mission to China*, London: Simpkin and Marshall 1842 and Jost O. Zetsche, *The Bible in China: History of the ‘Union Version’ or The Culmination of Protestant Missionary Bible Translation in China*, Sankt Augustin: Steyler Verlag 1999. On the gestation of the first Chinese Catholic Bible version, see B. Willeke, “Das Werden der chinesischen katholischen Bibel”, in: *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft* XVI (1960), pp. 281-295.

popular religious universe.<sup>37</sup> The state examination system produced a highly literate elite, to whom the education of the general population was a moral imperative. Through gentry-funded initiatives and traditional village schools, pupils in rural China received their basic education through the medium of the “Three-Character Classic”, *Sanzijing* 三才經, and therefore possessed a basic degree of familiarity with Confucian principles and with the style of canonical writings.<sup>38</sup> China’s semi-literate villagers thus shared the same respect for the written word as the Confucian elite, and quite naturally allocated great importance to religious ideas codified in written form. The constant generation of religious writings by Christian missionaries for this reason must have seemed like a very natural process of religious rejuvenation.<sup>39</sup>

By the middle of the Qing period, the state institutions had become sufficiently aware of the threat emanating from sectarian movements to ban the distribution of their writings as the “spreading and teaching of heretical religion” (*xichuan xiejiao* 西傳邪教). This policy must be seen against the background of millenarian Buddhism, which from the 1430s proliferated as a direct consequence of the popularity of *baojuan* 寶卷.<sup>40</sup> Sectarian writings appealing to rural populations would often be concealed by orthodox titles and an official-looking “coating”: Pages

---

<sup>36</sup> For a comparative analysis of the written word in Christendom and in China, see Xiaochao Wang, *Christianity and Imperial Culture*, pp. 184-186.

<sup>37</sup> See Barend ter Haar, *Ritual and Mythology of the Chinese Triads*, pp. 170-177 (on the use of writing and scripture recitation in sacrificial and blood bond societies).

<sup>38</sup> Though still far from any notion of “universal”, the educational system of late imperial China profited from the educationalism inherent in Confucianism. Many rural districts, in particular in the Jiangnan, had an ample supply of charity schools (*yixue* 義學), community schools (*shexue* 社學) and private academies (*shuyuan* 書院). See K. C. Hsiao, *Rural China*, pp. 235-258.

<sup>39</sup> Protestant educational ambitions, for instance the Morrison Educational Society, would benefit from the same phenomenon during the nineteenth century. See Alice Henrietta Gregg, *China and Educational Autonomy: The Changing Role of the Protestant Educational Missionary in China, 1807-1937*, Syracuse / New York: Syracuse University Press 1946 (UMI print 1977), pp. 12-18.

<sup>40</sup> See R. H. C. Shek, “Religion and Society in Late Ming”, pp. 155-157. Not unlike the Communist literary propaganda of the 1940s and 1950s, *baojuan* frequently played on the theme of moral fortitude in adverse conditions. The use of *baojuan* by the founder of the Luo movement should be seen as a measure of its popularity, since its founder Luo Qing 羅清 (1442-1527) disapproved of the “empty

of officially approved religious commentaries concealing a heterodox textual core. The state acted against sectarian movements by impounding as many *baojuan* as officials could lay their hands on, and by sending the woodblock matrixes to the imperial capital, for inspection by the Grand Council and for ultimate destruction.<sup>41</sup> The incriminated persons fared little better: The standard punishment for the possession of subversive writings was one hundred blows with the heavy cane.<sup>42</sup> Officials were employed in certain provinces with the sole task of producing Confucian counter-propaganda in the guise of such sectarian writings, in order to “enlighten the commoners”. During the late imperial period, books were being printed for an ever-increasing audience in the metropolises of eastern China, percolating as second-hand items along the main waterways into the empire’s vast interior. Their contents invariably reflected the mental preoccupations of the readership - whether this audience formed part of the elite or belonged to a more common background - and were easily affected by social change.<sup>43</sup> The writings of Christian missionaries followed this time-honoured literary tradition of religious expression, rejuvenating the vocabulary of popular religiosity with new names and concepts, yet remaining truthful to the style and argumentative structure of their Confucian and Buddhist competitors. In the following we will analyse some of the “Christian sutras” read and distributed during the century of prohibition.

---

recitation” of religious tracts - and of Maitreyanism in particular. Cf. Zhou Yumin and Shao Yong, *Zhongguo huibang shi*, pp. 27-28 and D. Overmyer, “Boatmen and Buddhas”, p. 298.

<sup>41</sup> See Susan Naquin, “Transmission of White Lotus Sectarianism”, p. 265. Naquin estimates the number of destroyed White Lotus scriptures between the years 1720 and 1840 at circa two thousand books, equalling four hundred titles.

<sup>42</sup> See L. C. Goodrich, *The Literary Inquisition of Ch’ien-lung*, Baltimore: Waverley 1935, p. 275. Despite all legal stipulations, the state usually took a rather more relaxed attitude towards distributors of such ‘seditious writings’ - at least prior to the great millenarian uprisings of the latter Qing. Cf. D. Overmyer, *Precious Volumes*, pp. 229-230.

b) *Chinese Christianity and the Written Word*

The arrest of Father Adeodato in 1805 alerted the state to investigate the dealings of China's numerous Christian communities, as well as the continuing propagation of the faith by foreign and Chinese missionaries.<sup>44</sup> The edict ordering Adeodato's exile beyond the Great Wall explicitly stated the use of translated writings for Christian proselytisation: "The books ... were originally all in Western script, making them inaccessible to the commoners of the interior. The results of the latest investigations have revealed that their newly printed writings are all in Chinese characters - the intention of this fact is self-evident."<sup>45</sup> The ensuing condemnation emphasised the "corrupting influence" of such materials on the minds of the Chinese and, even more importantly, on the members of the Manchurian aristocracy. To Qing officials, such highly venerated religious "sutras" were reminiscent of the feared White Lotus, an umbrella term for the millenarian Buddhist movements of the late imperial period. As with other printed examples of heresy, officials began to compile registers of Christian writings, impounding and destroying scriptures as well as printing blocks.<sup>46</sup> In the official terminology used by the prosecuting state, Buddhist and Christian liturgical objects and writings merged into one large category of

---

<sup>43</sup> For a summary of popular book printing, see Evelyn Sakakida Rawski, *Education and Popular Literacy in Ch'ing China*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press 1979, pp. 111-123.

<sup>44</sup> See the Propaganda document relating to the consequences of the Adeodato affair, archived as APF SOCP, *Indie Orientali*, 1817, ff. 33-34. In the Spanish translation: *El mencionado Tô-tien xí* [De Tianci 天字字字字, i.e. Adeodato] *tubo el atrevimiento de propagar ocultamente su secta. ... Por eso se hallan ahora muchos libros traducidos con nuestros caracteres*. It continues with the rhetorical question concerning Adeodato's intention (*Te pregunto ahora, Tô-tien xí, qué designo formaba tu corrompido corazón?*), to which the judge replied himself that it could only have been intended to corrupt the minds of loyal subjects (*porqué así corrompen las buenas costumbres de este imperio*).

<sup>45</sup> The memorial by Cao Wenzhi 曹文志, Wu Mingqiu 吴明秋 and Liu E 刘鄂 is archived at the FHA, scroll 9258, original document 493, sub-numbers 35 and 36.

<sup>46</sup> See Susan Naquin, *Millenarian Rebellion in China*, pp. 19-24. The above APF document, SOCP, *Indie Orientali*, 1817, folium 35, also mentions the confiscation of printed Christian materials in the churches of the capital during the persecutions of 1805 and 1810. The official zeal to control the dissemination of religious writings is made evident in the *Po-xie xiang bian* 辟邪相编 ("Detailed refutation of heresy") compiled by Huang Yubian 黄裕编, magistrate in Zhili between 1830 to

religious “heresy”. Sacred scriptures, official investigators observed, were either “chanted aloud” (*nian* 念) or read quietly for “meditative fasting” (*chisu xiuxing* 晝思息行), an observation valid for both Buddhist and Christian groups. In popular Christianity as well as Buddhism, singing - i.e. “*baajuan* recitation” (*xuan juan* 宣卷) - often led to a state of trance, inviting spirits into the world of the living.<sup>47</sup>

What did the spiritual diet of the eighteenth-century Christians consist of? The most voluminous publications were missionary works originating from early missionary activity. A frequently copied item was the compilation of the conversations of Julio Aleni and his fellow missionaries by the convert Li Jiubiao 李九保, published between 1630 and 1640 as the *Kouduo richao* 口述日抄 (“Daily record of oral exhortations”). In the year 1638 the author’s brother Li Jiugong 李九公 published a “Mirror for the Encouragement of Cultivation”, *Lixiu yijian* 列修異見.<sup>48</sup> By the close of the eighteenth century, this Confucio-Christian masterpiece had become one of the standard texts of Chinese Christianity, as well as a target of anti-heretical government action.<sup>49</sup> The same goes for the highly intellectual writings of Yang Tingyun, a “Christo-Confucian” of the seventeenth century, who made history by introducing Christianity as a rival to (orthodox) Buddhism to his fellow scholar officials. Despite the hostility which subsequently arose, Yang Tingyun’s *Tian-shi mingbian* 天時明辨 - “A discourse on the differences between Buddhism and Christianity” was still frequently cited

---

1842. Its sixty-eight *baajuan*, in six volumes, are accompanied by a condemnatory admonition not to stray from the path of orthodoxy. See Shek, *Religion and Society in Late Ming*, pp. 158-160.

<sup>47</sup> On the hymnals of the Taiping, see Rudolf G. Wagner, *Reenacting the Heavenly Vision*, p. 89 as well as Shek, *Religion and Society in Late Ming*, pp. 200-201.

<sup>48</sup> The *Kouduo richao* is referred to by Erik Zürcher in “Confucian and Christian Religiosity”, p. 13 ff. It is also the subject of his article “The Lord of Heaven and the Demons”, pp. 357 - 375.

<sup>49</sup> See N. Standaert, “Chinese Christian Visits to the Underworld”, p. 56.



during the closing decades of the eighteenth century. In fact, many similar titles had reached a broad popular readership, often outside the urban centres visited by the early missionaries and in spite of the exclusive nature of their original target audience. In addition to the copious works by Julio Aleni and Emmanuel Diaz - such as *Sanshan lunxueji* 三山論學集 (‘‘Recorded sermons from the three mountains’’, *Tianzhu shengjiao sizi jingwen* 天主聖教四字經文 (‘‘Four character hymnal on the sacred faith in the lord of heaven’’) or *Tianzhu jiangsheng yanxing jixiang* 天主降生言行記相 (‘‘Recorded phenomena on the words and deeds of the Lord during his descent to the world’’) - the early writings of Matteo Ricci (mostly the *Tianzhu shiyi* 天主十義 - ‘‘True account of the lord of heaven’’ and *Tianzhu jiaoyao* 天主教要 - ‘‘Outline of the Christian faith’’) helped Christians define the understanding of their faith. But it was in particular the shorter meditational writings which proved intellectually accessible to the majority of Chinese Christians, such as the *Tianzhu shengjiao rike* 天主聖教日課 (‘‘Daily lessons in the sacred faith’’) by Luigi Buglio and Emmanuel Diaz or the *Yesu shengti daowen* 耶穌聖體道文 (‘‘Prayers reflecting on the sacred body of Jesus’’ by Aleni. In a memorial of the year 1814, for instance, two such ‘‘heretical books’’ (*xieshu* 邪書), attributed to the Jesuits Joseph-Anne-Marie de Moyriac de Mailla and Julio Aleni, are described in great detail in a memorial by Ying He 應和 and He Ning 何寧.<sup>50</sup> The two volumes, *Shengnian guangyi quanbian* 聖年廣益全編 (‘‘A complete almanac of blessings’’) and *Wanwu zhenyuan* 萬物真源 (‘‘The true origin of all things’’), had survived the destruction of the Northern Cathedral - and thus symbolically the century of prohibition as such. Another survivor of the razed Beitang

---

<sup>50</sup> The memorial of the year 1815 is filed at the FHA as scroll 9261, original document 501, sub-number 15.

cathedral are dozens of pamphlets which shed light on the “liturgical diet” supplied to the faithful of the capital region. The *Calendarium generale perpetuum Diocesis Pekinensis* compiled by Bishop Gouvea in 1788, for instance, contains 170 pages of meditative texts, prayers and psalms for different occasions. Most of these were based on subjects familiar to Catholics all over the Christian world, but several must have been composed for the succour of the harassed community in Beijing, in particular the meditations for the martyrs of the missions to Japan, India and China.<sup>51</sup>

The fate of the *Beitang* 北京堂, Beijing’s Northern Cathedral, reflects the changing fortunes of the capital’s Christian community itself.<sup>52</sup> Founded in 1693, it served a growing local community, harbouring an increasing amount of scriptural materials, mainly used for the proselytisation of the capital’s literati elite. Following the edict of 1724, it was decided to concentrate the holdings of all missionary libraries in the Library of the Sacred Saviour.<sup>53</sup> The newly stocked library included the holdings of Beijing’s four cathedrals, of more than a dozen missionary book collections from private collections in Beijing and from the provinces, as well as a considerable number of titles of unclear origin. Unlike the manuscript archives, the book collection survived the disturbances of the two centuries following its erection without major damage.<sup>54</sup> Its arduous journeys included a temporary refuge in a Christian cemetery in Beijing, a sojourn in a small Lazarist parish in Inner Mongolia,

---

<sup>51</sup> The *Calendarium generale* is part of the Beitang collection (shelf mark 2875), at present kept at the National Library (Peking Library) without access for the general public. Queries as to the current state of the collections should be addressed to the Chinese section of the British Library, London.

<sup>52</sup> See Lars Peter Laamann, “The Current State of the Beitang Library”, in: *Bulletin of the European Association of Sinological Librarians*, VI (September 1996), pp. 11-13.

<sup>53</sup> Churches were usually dedicated to Christ the Saviour, whereas chapels and prayer houses for female believers were devoted to Mary. The *Beitang* library hence had the official name *Bibliotheca Sancti Salvatoris*. See Margiotti, *Il cattolismo nello Shansi*, p. 583, note 43.

<sup>54</sup> Regrettably the manuscript collection fell victim to a fire in 1864. Rumours concerning the existence of a recently discovered cache of archival materials were ill-founded, as I witnessed myself in 1995. The papers were indubitably not examples of the expected missionary correspondence, but simply hand-written filing cards for a catalogue - probably Verhaeren’s.

followed by years of administration by the Russian Orthodox mission. It was only allowed to return to its original home once the mission had been reestablished under the protection of the French state in the middle of the nineteenth century. The church building then had to be reconstructed, since the original building was destroyed by fire in 1827, during the final eruption of anti-Christian state action, which forced the local clergy as well as the most prominent members of Beijing's Christian life to seek refuge in the surrounding countryside.<sup>55</sup> Eighteenth-century official sources abound in evidence of "seditious scrolls" circulated by Christian communities. The state was fully aware of the edifying effect of printed materials from the capital on the morale of Christian communities in the countryside, and was hence determined to tackle the problem at its root. In a report from the turn of the century, we read of the public immolation of more than one hundred Christian titles, which went on for a period of three months.<sup>56</sup> During the 1805 persecution in Beijing, hostile bystanders hurled abuse and hard objects at the representatives of the Christian religion.<sup>57</sup> By the turn of the century, it became obvious that the churches in the capital were being used for printing, storing and distributing printed materials. In a memorial by the State Council of 1810, the supreme ministers appealed to the emperor to have officials enter the missionaries' premises, read through the entire material, calculated at 173 titles, and to subsequently destroy all Chinese language titles, lest they be distributed to Chinese commoners.<sup>58</sup> From the edict issued in 1811 we know that books and woodblock matrices stored in the houses of the Europeans were confiscated, and that the

---

<sup>55</sup> The fate of the book collection - and that of the congregations of Beijing - is spelt out in a letter by Emanuele D. Goldino, attaché of the Portuguese ecclesiastic administration of Goa, sent to Rome from Macau in October 1806. See APF SC, series III, *Cina et Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, folium 196 R.

<sup>56</sup> See the letter by Luigi da Signa, from Shanxi province to Rome, 7 March 1806, recorded as APF SC, "Cina and Regni Adiacenti" III (1806-1811), folium 106 V.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibidem*, 107 R.

auspicious character columns alongside and over the portals were ordered to be erased. Books were to be handed over to the authorities and all written communication with Chinese Christians outlawed - even though the latter were likely to be illiterate. Fearful of the effect of letters sent by the European missionaries to the Christian communities of the provinces, a blanket ban on all missionary correspondence was imposed.<sup>59</sup>

What the ministers regarded as politically dangerous was the “private” nature of the Christian communities, escaping the watchful eye of the fatherly state. An investigation into the Christian communities in Ba-xian, Sichuan, for instance, reveals that memorising and reciting Christian writings at home - either in private or in the company of fellow believers - was common practice.<sup>60</sup> The oldest members of the congregation, in their seventies, had kept copies of writings composed and donated by European missionaries in the years preceding the Yongzheng edict of 1724. Once having memorised these “sutras”, it was seen as the father’s duty to ensure that his children learnt the holy words by heart, as they had been passed on to him by his own father.<sup>61</sup> Those who could read were given Christian tracts which would then be studied and memorised in private. The others had to learn the sutras “from the lips of their teacher” (*kou-chuan* 口傳). When the Ba-xian Christians were questioned about the nature of the writings, the answer was emphatic - “orthodox and beneficial, and by no means heretical.” They were recited as a sign of filial respect, in order to

---

<sup>58</sup> The edict of JQ 15 (1810) is reprinted in the “Veritable Records of the Jiaqing Emperor”, volume (*juan*) 146, and cited in Zhang Ze, *Qingdai jinjiaoqi de tianzhujiao*, pp. 165-170.

<sup>59</sup> See the aforementioned letter of 1 Oct. 1807 by Emmanuele Conforti to Rome from Beijing, on the effects of the Adeodato affair, APF SC, series III, *Cina & Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, folium 400 R.

<sup>60</sup> See *Ba-xian dang’anguan*, part 5, section 13 (“Christianity and Heresy”), pp. 240-245: “Cases resulting from an investigation into Christianity in Ba-xian, QL 47-48 [1782-1783]” (口傳之書).



four chapters proved so popular that they had to be reprinted several times. The shorter sequel expounding sections of the Bible (*Shengjing guangyi* 聖經廣義), printed and distributed in the early 1740s, introduced the main tenets of Christian doctrine - as well as the contributions of Ignatius Loyola - along the pattern of a daily almanac. *Ruijianlu* 日見錄 (“Records of accurate reflections”), a popularised version of the gospel, was written in the first year of the Qianlong period (1736) by Ignace Kögler, SJ (*alias* Dai Jinxian 戴進賢) and Xu Maode 徐瑪德. Within a handful of years, it had spread to remote areas over the whole of northern and central China. In the eighth year of the Qianlong reign (1744), the Beijing Christian Yin Hongxu 尹洪序 published *Zhujing tiwei* 聖經題義 (“The basic meaning of the lord’s scriptures”), a condensed catechism in eight chapters, and also wrote *Bo huijiao* 破回教 (“Refutation of Islam”), which never reached the printing blocks. Three years later the Chinese Christian Sun Zhang 孫張, who worked for the palace administration as a translator, published the tract *Xing-li zhenquan* 行禮真詮 (“True explanation of nature and principle”) expounding the tenets of Christianity along the argumentation of Song-Ming Confucian doctrine. In 1758, unperturbed by the threat of harsh penalties, he even translated a synopsis into Manchurian, for use by Bannermen. Shortly afterwards, the Chinese priest Shen Dongxing 申東星 authored *Yijian daoyi* 一見道義 (“Simplified guide to the art of praying”), widely admired for its elegant style. The year 1766 saw the publication of another booklet for prayer, the *Chongxiu jingyun* 重修經韻 (“Essential compilation for adoration and meditation”) by the court officials An Guoning 安國寧 and Lin Deyao 林德耀 - a condensed version of an original from the Yongzheng period. The latter also wrote a biography of Ignatius Loyola (*Sheng yinajue* 聖音覺, the *Sheng shaowulüe jiuri*

*jingli* 九日禮儀(“Nine-day rite according to St Xavier”), in addition to *Zhaoyong shenjing* 照用神鏡 (“Reflections of the eternal sacred mirror”). Five years later, in 1771, the court official Florian Bahr, SJ (Wei Jijin 魏繼進) wrote his *Shengyong xujie* 聖用續解 (“Sequel to the holy hymns”), plus a *vita* of St John Nepomuk (*Sheng ruowang niebomu zhuan* 聖若望尼波墨傳), published prior to his death in the same year. Other publications from the end of the Qianlong period include a synopsis of the Old and New Testaments, *Gu-xin shengjing* 古今聖經, by Louis de Poirot, SJ (He Qingtai 何清泰), as well as titles which no longer survive but are nevertheless mentioned in memorials, such as these three titles found in the private collection of a Cantonese Christian in the year 1784: *Zhu sumi pian* 珠璣篇 (“Illuminating coarse superstitions”), *Chuhui dawen* 初會大文 (“A first catechism” - but probably the *Chuhui wenda* 初會問答 by Pedro de la Piñuela<sup>65</sup>), and *Yi ping* 易平 (“Righteousness comprehended”).<sup>66</sup> When the numbers of Christian intellectuals and foreign priests began to diminish towards the end of the century of prohibition, ordinary Chinese Christians stepped in, by copying earlier writings and by distributing these to the Christian of the surrounding countryside. When, for instance, state interrogators extracted the confessions of the Tongbo Christians of Henan province, the officials found out that the itinerant

<sup>65</sup> On the work of Pedro de la Piñuela (*alias* Shiduolu zhenduo 失都魯真德 1655-1704, in China from 1676 to his death), see Antonio Sisto Rosso, “Pedro de Piñuela, OFM, Mexican Missionary to China and Author”, *Franciscan Studies* VIII-3 (1948), p. 263 ff.

<sup>66</sup> The article by Adrianus C. Dudink, “The Zikawei (知幾齋) Collection in the Jesuit Theologate Library at Fujen 府新 University (Taiwan): Background and Draft Catalogue”, in: *Sino-Western Cultural Relations Journal* XVIII (1996), pp. 1-40 provides insight into the abundance of translations and compositions by European missionaries, mostly originating from the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The *Bibliotheca Missionum* makes reference to some of the titles listed above. Unfortunately, exhaustive information on many other eighteenth-century publications remains elusive. All titles used for this chapter are listed separately in Appendix 6.





Christian scriptures.<sup>71</sup> Two unnamed “sutras” (*jingjuan* 經卷) were discovered in the home of Wang Xiangsheng. Both volumes, the memorial points out, were “hand-written” (*moxie* 墨寫), i.e. not printed. Investigations in other households produced a variety of titles, including early missionary translations by Matteo Ricci and Michele Ruggieri, in addition to “fasting manuals” and “rosaries” (*zhaidan* 齋單 and *suzhu* 珠串, respectively - both Buddhist terms), as well as ritual texts, such as the Ten Commandments. Several of the scriptures are commented on as being “worn” (*canque* 穿用), which indicates their age and use.<sup>72</sup>

One example of pamphlets composed by Christians from memory comes from the hamlet Longmentan 隆明坦, near Chongqing in Sichuan province.<sup>73</sup> The pamphlets mentioned are a *Tianzhu jing* 天主經 (“Scripture of the lord of heaven”), *Shengmujing* 聖母經 (“Scripture of the holy mother”), *Xinjing* 信心經 (“Scripture of faith”), as well as a *Chuzao tiandi jiangben* 創造天地綱本 (“Commentary on the creation”). We owe knowledge of these titles to the apostate He Guoda, a seasonal worker employed as a cotton harvester by Christian landowners in Sichuan province. Having been initiated into the basic principles of their faith by local Christians, He Guoda declared that he had only learned the beginning of each of the Christian scriptures by heart and, being illiterate,

[illegible]

<sup>72</sup> See Margiotti, *Il cattolicesimo nello Shansi*, pp. 277-281.

<sup>73</sup> See FHA, scroll 9258, original document 492, numbers 19-20. The memorial is dated QL 39/4/12 (i.e. 21/5/1774). The vernacular of the original underlines the limited knowledge of the apostate:

[illegible]

that he merely knew of these writings what the Christians had disclosed by word of mouth. Of the *Tianzhujing* we learn that

in an ode entitled ‘Our Heaven’, among others, it is mentioned that one will suddenly see the truth, one’s true body-and-soul will be sanctified, one’s wisdom will become like that of an emperor, able to behold the infinite cosmos. I am waiting for you [sinners] now to put your guilt on me, so that you will not have anything any more to be desired. I shall show my mercy and take away your bad luck, your nightmares.

The *Shengmujing* seems to be a translation of the *Ave Maria*:

*Er-fu* Holy Ma-li-ya, fulfilled among the holy. The Lord has bestowed you with Righteousness, and has liberated you from your legion of grief. And despite having despatched you for only a brief time, you will soon be with the Lord of Heaven forever. Holy Ma-li-ya, when you ascend to Heaven, turn towards me .....

The *Xinjing* is nothing less than the *Credo*. In the simplified version reproduced by He Guoda, it runs like this: “I believe in the all-capable Lord of Heaven, who sent his extraordinary son down [to earth] with the sacred seal.” The brief account of the *Chuzao tiandi jiangben* seems like the abridged version of the introduction to the *Genesis*:

In the beginning of the creation of Heaven and earth, all human beings were created by the Lord of Heaven, and the same Lord of Heaven created the multitude of humanity.

These printed fragments of the Christian faith were memorised by a manual labourer, with a self-professed interest in “black magic”. Aided by apostates and Christians on the margins of their congregations, other religious movements also made use of such textual fragments - usually isolated and out of context - borrowing ideas, images and terminology from their Christian rivals for their own incantations. Early nineteenth century reports by missionary visitors confirm that this was indeed common practice.<sup>74</sup>

Christianity, with its plethora of religious writings, seemed as puzzling to the investigating officials as the other popular sects which made use of printed materials. The fact that most villagers had difficulties deciphering the characters of the title pages alone should not lead us to underestimate their value. Printed scriptures on the contrary added to the range of iconographic objects which made Christianity a truly popular religion at a rural level. During the eighteenth century, the chanting of Christian scriptures took place in a religious territory which was largely in flux: Either ignored or classified as “heretical” by the guardians of Confucian orthodoxy, Christianity developed from a recognisably foreign implant to a genuine expression of popular religious life. The alien origins of Chinese Christianity, however, bestowed a mysterious aura exerting an exotic appeal on the rural audience. The state’s increasingly condemnatory verdict of Christianity at the beginning of the nineteenth century can be explained by two developments. Firstly, the process of Christianity’s

---

<sup>74</sup> Cf. B. Willeke, “The Report of the Apostolic Visitation”, p. 258: The relevant chapter is entitled “On abuses among the faithful and rites introduced to the people...” (“*De abusibus circa fidem et ritus inventis in populo ...*”). One ominous sentence reads: “Errors and harmful interpretations concerning the Holy Faith introduced into the population have been dispelled, superstitious thought erased from the minds of the people, [to the extent that] no more abuse and sacrilegious deed is to be seen” (*Inducti errores in populo pravaeque opiniones circa sancta fidei dogmata dispellantur, vigentes superstitiones*

inculturation had rendered the religion highly accessible to the followers of other “dangerous” religious movements, and secondly, the numbers of foreigners penetrating ever deeper into the empire increased drastically at the beginning of the century. Alarmed by the encroachment of southern Asia by Europe’s colonial powers, the Qing administration now saw China’s Christians as a potential threat to the state. Missionary activity during the nineteenth century would differ sharply from the first period of the China mission: Again, rural communities were targeted through the use of pictures, vernacular style and easily recognisable metaphors. Printed on modern printing presses with movable metal types, the quantity of printed materials could be increased whereas the price of printed items was brought down to more affordable levels. Both developments, modern missions and modern printing, thus marked a clear end of the “Christian sutras” which had come to characterise Chinese Christianity during the long century of missionary prohibition. Both developments will be analysed separately in the following two chapters.

## **Chapter 9: Christianity as internal menace**

### ***1. Between social control and official paranoia***

---

*ex hominum mente penitus auferantur, nullus amplius abusus, nulla sacramentorum profanatio imposterum perspiciatur*). Caveat lector!

Attempts by imperial administrations to curb undesired religious developments can be traced to the reign of the Tang Taizong emperor, who in the year 632 decreed that Buddhist monks and nuns, as well as Daoist hermits, were under obligation to venerate their parents. One thousand years later, officials also resorted to anti-heresy legislation in order to put pressure on religious movements. The legal basis for government action against secret societies was provided by the “Legal Examples for Purifying Evil” (*Qingbi leichao* 清比例抄, section ‘Societies and Gangs’, *Huidanglei* 會典例), the “Legal Statutes of the Qing Empire” (*Daqing huidian* 大清會典, chapter 194: ‘Penal Law - Treacherous Congregations’), as well as the “Qing Codex” (*Daqing lüli* 大清律例), in a section devoted to the suppression of witchcraft and sorcery (*jinzhi shi-wu xieshu* 禁制時巫邪術).<sup>1</sup> These were complemented by specific decrees issued during the Kangxi, Yongzheng and Qianlong periods.<sup>2</sup> In the second year of his reign (1724), for instance, the Yongzheng emperor decreed decisive government action against all activities regarded as morally corrupting and subversive. Despite his private Buddhist sympathies, the Yongzheng emperor expressed concern over the tendency, particularly among rural girls, to “become religious out of the sweetness of their hearts” (*gan xin ru jiao* 甘心入教). The same phenomenon could be detected in young women who had

[illegible]

converted to Christianity. Though it was often economic hardship that induced Buddhist and Christian women to enter organised convents or houses inhabited by like-minded women, the concerned state feared for the moral order of society, urging young women not to withdraw from the world but to pursue the proper Confucian role of wife and mother.<sup>3</sup> History had taught the [male] officials that if women did not devote themselves fully to their traditional roles as maids, wives and mothers the worst had to be expected. Through quiet domestic influence they would instil heretical thoughts into the minds of their menfolk and children.<sup>4</sup> Female leaders could - as impersonators of the Eternal Mother - add to the allure of millenarian movements.<sup>5</sup> Under extreme circumstances, women - once they had forsaken their place in family and society - could even transform themselves into battalions of amazon warriors - as witnessed in the White Lotus rebellions of 1796.<sup>6</sup>

“Instilling poisonous thoughts into innocent folk”(□□□□□□□□□□□□) and “confusing the world, bewitching the people” (□□□□□□□□) were standard accusations against heterodox religious movements. Imperial injunctions also condemned orthodox religion for encouraging anti-social acts such as monasticism.<sup>7</sup> “Vacuous talking” (*xutan* □□□□) about transmigration (*lunhui* □□□□), hell (*diyu*

---

<sup>2</sup> See Qin Baoqi □□□□□□, *Hongmen zhenshi* □□□□□□□□ (“A True Account of the Heaven and Earth Society”), Fuzhou: Fujian People’s Press □□□□□□□□□□□□ 1995, pp. 14-16.

<sup>3</sup> See FHA, “Palace Memorials Approved by the Emperor’s Hand” (*zhupi zouzhe* □□□□□□□□), category ‘Religious Affairs’ (*zongjiao shiwulei*) □□□□□□□□□□, document number 9. On the phenomenon of the “Christian virgins”, see above, p. 151 ff.

<sup>4</sup> A view held by the veteran official Na Yancheng, commenting on the role of women during the Eight Trigrams uprising of 1813. Cf. de Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution*, p. 451.

<sup>5</sup> Such as the charismatic mother-figure Third Daughter Wu (*Wu san-niang* □□□□□□) during the Wang Lun uprising of 1774. See S. Naquin, *Shantung Rebellion*, pp. 82-85.

<sup>6</sup> In this case, led by the wife of the (male) rebel leader Wang Qilin □□□□□□. For more information on these “Amazon-Bandits” (*qima nüzei* □□□□□□□□), see de Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution*, p. 360, as well as Erhard Rosner, “Frauen als Anführerinnen chinesischer Sekten”, in: Gert Naundorf, Karl-Heinz Pohl and Hans-Hermann Schmidt (eds), *Religion und Philosophie in Ostasien - Festschrift für Hans Steiniger zum 65. Geburtstag*, Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann 1985, pp. 239-246.

□□□□) and retribution (*baoying* □□□□) as well as confusion of the “natural order” of day and night (*bufen zhouye* □□□□□□□□) led to seditious sectarianism (*lidang jiemeng, ni yu dayi* □□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□). In the eyes of the state officials, popular Christianity was deeply involved in such socially destabilising activities. In the campaign against local Christianity, the official Ying Shan □□□□ explicitly stated the implication of Christianity for the “treacherous heresy” of popular movements in the early nineteenth century: Commoners who for religious reasons, transgressed the *baojia* regulations, practised heretical rites and followed Western teachings were to be treated as rebels (□□□□□□□□□□□□□□).<sup>8</sup> Regardless of the spiritual convictions of the offenders, the mere fact of weakening the fabric of local society had to be seen as a menace to its security - in a moral as well as a physical sense.

Vocally expressed by Ying Shan towards the close of the mid-Qing period, government action against popular Christianity can be traced back to the beginning of the century of repression. The “Yongzheng edict” of 1724 against Christian missionary activity should hence be seen as part of a comprehensive effort to stem the rise of “uncontrollable” religious movements. In the missionary correspondence of the early eighteenth century, complaints about unjustified persecutions were voiced, such as in the description of the persecution which took place in the locality of *Zing Ceu* in Shandong province in the year 1714.<sup>9</sup> The Christian villagers stood accused of belonging to a heretical sect, of amassing more than three thousand followers in order to proselytise among ordinary farmers. The crucial element of the accusation was that

---

<sup>7</sup> Reflected in the popular saying “If one son leaves the material world, the entire clan will ascend to heaven” (*yizi chusu, jiuzu shengtian* □□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. FHA, scroll 9258, original document 501, sub-number 12, entitled “Concerning the trial against the Christian Zhao Heng” (□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□).

<sup>9</sup> Qingzhou in Shandong province, according to Dr Tiedemann.

they threatened to “undermine public order”, thus destabilising the society whose pacification the Qing had only just achieved.<sup>10</sup>

From the latter half of the Kangxi period onwards there is evidence of a proliferation of underground societies. Though non-clan brotherhoods had already been widespread during the Ming period (reflected, for Liangshanbo in Shandong, in the novel *Water Margin* 水滸傳), the first half of the Qing witnessed their transition to a new force in late imperial history. The political changes of the Manchurian conquest fostered local opposition, which expressed itself through the formation of close-knit, localised secret brotherhoods defying the new rulers. From the beginning of the Yongzheng period, these societies started to adopt secret names for their members, and began to contact neighbouring groups sympathetic to their aims. In the northern Han areas, secret religious societies were concentrated in a belt comprising Henan, Shandong and Zhili.<sup>11</sup> A “southern belt” linking Jiangxi, Fujian (including the island of Taiwan), Guangdong with the minority areas in Guangxi and Yunnan, also existed, i.e. in the very regions where anti-Manchu forces had held out longest. Keeping the volatile blend of China’s different ethnic and religious groups together added to the magistrates’ burden.<sup>12</sup> As these “underground societies” were often implicated in anti-government violence, the Yongzheng ruler issued warnings to local magistrates to “curb treason and end heresy” (*jiējian zhixié* 緝奸治邪).<sup>13</sup> The reported arrest of the *Luojiao* propagator Han Derong 韓德榮 of Dingxiang 定襄 County in Shanxi Province may serve as an example. The source cites all the

---

<sup>10</sup> See BAV Lat. Vat. 12849, *Brevis narratio itineris ex Italia usq. ad Chinam*, [etc.] for contemporary missionary views confirming this observation.

<sup>11</sup> The very “macro-regions” where most of the archival materials used for this thesis originate from.

<sup>12</sup> Nowhere more so than in newly-colonised territories such as Taiwan. See the memorial on the *Huangjiao* rebellion, reprinted in *Shiliao xuncan* 史料叢刊, part “Heaven” 天, volume 11, pp. 365-372, volume 16, pp. 539-544 and 567-568.



usual characteristics of popular religious movements: Setting up shrines for worship at home (*jiayou kaitang* 家佑開堂), statues of idols (*shenxiang* 神像), the burning of incense (*shaoxiang* 燒香), Buddha worship through the reciting of sutras (*nianjing baifo* 念經拜佛) and the abstention from “unclean” food (*buchi wuhun* 不食葷).<sup>14</sup> But crucially, the report also states contacts between Han Derong’s own cult and other religious movements - firstly with the White Lotus, then also with Catholicism. It names the culprit as an “intruder with criminal thoughts” (*wailai sifeifan* 外來私匪犯), accused of establishing a heretical sect (*changli xiejiao* 常立邪教). The combination of “heretical” ideas and the uncontrolled movement of subjects in the different regions of the empire had to be treated with utmost concern, even if there was no direct evidence of seditious activities.<sup>15</sup> In many cases, perceived similarities between Christians and other religious movements - relating to their organisational structure, initiation rites and nomenclature - led to undiscerning persecution<sup>16</sup>. In addition to its concern about popular cults, unrest among the Muslim population of the western areas put the state on the defensive even against established religion. During the insurrection of 1781 in Lanzhou, the rebels vowed to replace the rule of the Qing by autochthonous institutions authorised by Koranic precepts. The involvement of Muslims in this and in later uprisings troubled the otherwise harmonious relationship between the Qing and the approved religious institutions of Islam, and affected the attitude towards Muslims in the empire as

---

<sup>13</sup> See Qin Baoqi, *Zhongguo dixia shehui*, pp. 119-121.

<sup>14</sup> “Reciting sutras, burning incense, abstaining from meat” (*nianjing* 念經, *shaoxiang* 燒香, *shizhai* 持齋) can be regarded as the “mantra” employed by officials in their description of (suspected) millenarian movements. See S. Naquin, *Shantung Rebellion*, p. 52, for an official characterisation of the Pure Water sect (*Qingshuijiao* 清水教).

<sup>15</sup> Reprinted in *Shiliao xuncan* 史料選刊, category ‘Earth’ 地 (13/3/10), volume 30, pp. 98-101. Han Derong is cited by de Groot as being the founder of the *Shouyuan* 壽元 sect, an offshoot of the *Luo* 羅 sect. See de Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution*, pp. 285-286 and 507.

such.<sup>17</sup> During the eighteenth century, Christians were frequently accused of collaborating with Muslim insurgents - a claim supported by the similarities between both monotheistic faiths.<sup>18</sup>

By retaliating against members of secret societies with the standard punishment for ordinary criminals (usually by applying one hundred blows with the bamboo cane), the state reacted by criminalising the symptoms of a crisis originating in the deteriorating socio-economic conditions of the eighteenth century. A rapid commercialisation of crops in extensive parts of the Han settlement area replaced the traditional pattern of subsistence-based agriculture with plantations of sugar, tea, tobacco and fruit. Coupled with the destruction caused by the quelling of earlier insurrections, and with the explosive growth of the overall population, the average farming area per person fell from 17.11 *mu* to 1.71 *mu* between the 1650s and the 1780s. Part of the unemployed population could be absorbed by labouring as permanent farmhands and casual workers. Others, who decided to stay behind in their rural homeland, relied increasingly on the benevolence of the skies and on the efficiency of official disaster relief.<sup>19</sup> But a large proportion migrated to the cities, where they tried to make a living as peddlers, labourers, canal workers, or simply as

---

<sup>16</sup> See Ma Zhao, *Shilun Qianlong shiqi (1736-1796) chajin tianzhujiao shijian*, pp. 24-29 for a discussion of similarities between Christian and other religious movements during the Qianlong period.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Bai Shouyi 白寿彝, *Bai shouyi minzu zongjiao lunwenji* 白寿彝民族宗教论文集 ("Essays on Ethnicity and Religion by Bai Shouyi"), Beijing: Beijing Normal University 北京师范大学 1992, pp. 379-382, and Hu Zhenhua 胡振华, *Zhongguo huiyu* 中国回语 ("China's Hui Nationality"), Yinchuan: Ningxia People's Press 宁夏人民出版社 1993, pp. 1-8. An interesting example of nineteenth century anti-Islamic Han nationalism can be found in the writings of Lu Yao 吕姚, who argued for systematic intermarriage between the two communities, in order to eradicate all "features" peculiar to the Muslim Hui. See *Huangchao jingshi wenbian* 皇朝经世文编 volume 69: 'Rites concerning Government' (*lizheng* 礼政), ff. 31-33.

<sup>18</sup> See B. Willeke, *Imperial Government and Catholic Missions*, pp. 46-49: "Similarities of Mohammedanism and Christianity in Chinese Eyes".

<sup>19</sup> See P.-E. Will, *Bureaucratie et famine*, pp. 117-134.

beggars, prostitutes, actors and other “unstable elements”.<sup>20</sup> With crime the order of the day, and old family ties quickly fading in relevance, the secret brotherhoods provided the organisational and emotional support the migrants had left behind in their native villages.<sup>21</sup> In so doing, they followed the experience observable in migrant communities around the world, in developing fervent religious beliefs pertinent to their new community.<sup>22</sup> For the year 1736, the last of the Yongzheng period, it is reported that

in the upper reaches of the Yangtse River there is a group of idle rascals, who gather the crowds into organised gangs in order to commit atrocious crimes. There are gangs of all shades and affiliations, such as the Searching the Flower and Big Sword gangs in Suzhou, the Five Sacred Mountains bandits in Shouzhou, the Exulting Heaven sect of Dingyuan County, the Three Vehicles sect of Nanling County ... and in every market place organised gangs of evil intent have disrupted the lives of the honest people. If we do not act in all severity, we fear that these gangs will multiply by the day, and corrupt the people’s hearts beyond repair. Hence we recommend [their leaders] be caned to death ....<sup>23</sup>

Outlawed by the state, secret organisations of all hues and shades colluded against manifestations of the government, attracting the interest of disgruntled

---

<sup>20</sup> See Zhou Yumin and Shao Yong, *Zhongguo huibang shi*, pp. 31-41 on the importance of canal workers for the formation of the Luo 洛 sect, and of the later Green Gangs (*Qingbang* 青幫) of the Lower Yangtse. The same topic is analysed in Daniel Overmyer in “Boatmen and Buddhas”, pp. 284-302 as well as by David Kelley, in: “Temples and Tribute Fleets”, p. 361 ff.

<sup>21</sup> Expressed in the Chinese saying “Transforming the differences in order to become one kith and kin” (*hua yixing wei tongxing* 化異姓為同姓). For more details on the history of mass migration, see Qin Baoqi, *Hongmen zhenshi*, pp. 17-33. See also Ho, *Studies on the Population of China*, (*passim*).

<sup>22</sup> See Bryna Goodman, *Native Place, City and Nation: Regional Networks and Identities in Shanghai, 1853-1937*, Berkeley: University of California Press 1995.

<sup>23</sup> *Shiliao xunkan* 勸善錄, section ‘Heaven’ 天, volume 1, pp. 32-33. The memorial is entitled: “Memorial by Zhao Hong’en 趙弘恩 and Zhao Guolin 趙國林 requesting an end to the spreading of heretical sectarianism” (為禁邪教請旨事). In the original wording of the memorial:



reprisals from his peers and from the district officials, He Guoda cut his plait - to indicate that he was now a fugitive, and therefore in desperate need of help - and revealed himself to his employer, Xie Defu 谢德福.<sup>28</sup> Under the influence of his maternal uncle he was urged to convert to Christianity, and made to memorise Christian scriptures under the tutelage of various Christians from the locality. He Guoda commented that Christian teachings were clearly “heretical” (*jiaofa buzheng* 邪教不正), for a variety of reasons:

Women and men mingle freely in the meetings, while during the chanting of the scriptures men are placed at the front of the hall, the women behind. The girls belonging to this sect are not allowed to marry outsiders. Converts are offered money in order to marry [Christian] girls .... In the mornings and evenings they make the sign of the cross with their hands, while chanting hymns. They use secret symbols and propitious characters.<sup>29</sup>

A foreign missionary, based at the neighbouring locality of Shengzhongping 圣中平, had also been spotted by him in Longmentan.<sup>30</sup> The total number of Christian families was put at twelve by He Guoda, neatly enumerating the names of the family heads. When he made his intention clear that he did not wish to remain a Christian, but had only been interested in the magical elements of the belief, the migrant was asked to repay his hosts for the cost of boarding. He later insisted on his

---

<sup>28</sup> De Groot reports that the White Lotus insurgents of 1799 used similar methods to prevent followers from defecting to the government. Cf. de Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution*, p. 362.

<sup>29</sup> 邪教之徒，男女混杂，在会中，男子居前，女子居后。其教不许嫁娶外人。凡入教者，必给钱娶教内女子。……早晚作十字手，念经。用暗号，用吉利字。<sup>See the above memorial, FHA, scroll 9258, original document 492, numbers 19-20, frame 340.</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Sichuan had always provided a more hospitable environment for foreign missionaries than the provinces of the northern interior. A letter sent to the Propaganda offices in 1815 provides a detailed list of clerics who were active in the province during the last few decades of the eighteenth century and at the beginning of the new century. The list also includes a Matthew Lo, native to the province, who had received his spiritual training at the Catholic college in Pondicherry, in southern India. Cf. APF SOCP, *Indie Orientali*, 1817, folium 16.

innocence, by repeating the fact that he had only had a weak grasp of the scriptures he had been taught, and that he was furthermore unable to read or write.

He Guoda's reference to the "mingling the sexes" (*nannü hunxiao* 男婦混交) may serve as a further example of the official perception of popular Christianity as a morally corrupting cult.<sup>31</sup> Confucian morality drew on ancient customs of sexual segregation, stipulated in the classical writings at the heart of early Qing orthodoxy, for instance the Book of Rites.<sup>32</sup> Millenarian movements made use of magical powers thought to be emanating from uncontrolled female sexuality.<sup>33</sup> Already two generations earlier, officials had commented on the detrimental influence of Christianity on socio-moral conventions. Matteo Ripa reported in his diary of the diatribes of the senior official Fan Shaozuo 范紹佐 against the practice of "congregating at night-time in order to disperse in the morning" (*ye ju, ming san* 夜聚明散), of "mingling chaotically under the same roof" (*nan-nü hunza tongtang* 男女混雜同堂).<sup>34</sup> The European missionaries of the early eighteenth century attempted to quell such rumours by trying to segregate their converts into exclusively male and female quarters, with the latter kept out of public view, to suit the mores of the time. The fact that (male) missionaries regularly spent long hours in these female oratories (*nühui* 女會) in order to plant the seed of their faith in rural

---

<sup>31</sup> An accusation also lodged against Buddhist movements, such as the *Xiantian* and *Longhua* cults. See de Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution*, p. 192.

<sup>32</sup> See Liu Dianjue 劉典覺 and Chen Fangzheng 陳方正, *Liji zhuzi suoyin* 禮記注疏, Hong Kong: *Shangwu yinshuguan* 商務印書館 1993, chapter 19 ("Leji 禮記"), p. 100: "If male and female is not segregated, then chaos will arise" (男女不別則亂).

<sup>33</sup> See S. Naquin, *Shantung Rebellion*, pp. 198-199, note 69.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. the letter by Carlo da Castorano to Matteo Ripa in Michele Fatica (ed.), *Matteo Ripa, Giornale (1705-1724), Vol. II (1711-1716)*, pp. 340-343.

China, gave rise to suspicion and jealousy.<sup>35</sup> Considering that the customs of the mid-Qing period dictated that women be confined to the inner quarters of their dwellings, and - if at all necessary - used the opposite side of the street when a man happened to approach, the allegation of “sharing the same roof” reeked indeed of illicit sexual adventures.<sup>36</sup> Not all Christians approved of this infringement of contemporary norms. John Hu, whilst on a visit to Paris in the 1720s, admonished bypassing couples to segregate, brandishing a flag with the characters “Men and women should remain separate” (*nan-nü fen-bie* 男婦分別).<sup>37</sup> While the allegation may merely refer to the custom of granting women the position of strong equals within sectarian movements, it also corresponds to the well-known suspicion against Buddhist clerics - and was presumably not completely unfounded. Women yearning for children often took their supplications to their local deities. Would it be inconceivable that some sought the necessary biological contribution, which they could not obtain from their husbands, from Buddhist and Christian priests instead?<sup>38</sup> A rare document illustrating that this phenomenon was not unknown in Christian circles is preserved in the Propaganda Fide archives. We hear excerpts of the confessions of the Chinese priest Paulus Van to his superiors on 29 July 1806:

When I took the confessions of four women in the town Cing cu hien, I included some obscene words in my advice. After the confession had come to an end, I copulated with them, and afterwards I imposed some

---

<sup>35</sup> See the admonitions concerning correct missionary techniques by Giuseppe Cerù, preserved at the Propaganda archives as document SOCP, *Indie Orientali*, 1723-1725, ff. 21/22.

<sup>36</sup> See the - meanwhile not uncontroversial - observations by Robert Gulik, *Sexual Life in Ancient China*, Leiden: E. J. Brill 1961, pp. 207 and 247.

<sup>37</sup> See J. Spence, *The Question of Hu*, p. 84.

<sup>38</sup> Examples of sexual deviations by Buddhist monks are quoted in Philip A. Kuhn, *Soulstealers*, passim. Readers are also reminded that the main character of the erotic novel *Roupu tuan* 肉圃團 is a Buddhist novice, ever-ready to explore the arts of the bedchamber. See Li Yu 李漁 (1611-1680[?]) and Patrick Hanan, (transl.), *The Carnal Prayer Mat* [*Roupu tuan* 肉圃團, 1657 edition], London:

penances and absolved the women. [...] One of the women approached me some days later to be granted confession ..., and I sinned with her in the same manner, but again I absolved her. ... I prostrate myself to your feet, Excellency, having committed the gravest and most horrendous sins, ... I, the most worthless servant, Priest Paulus Van.<sup>39</sup>

Such misdemeanour may certainly have been restricted to individuals. They were nevertheless damaging to the reputation of Christianity, since they emphasised the general impression that “monks” were not to be trusted - a potentially serious problem for Catholicism.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, as the guardian of stability in the empire, the Confucian state regarded it as its duty to scrutinise and legislate against any movements posing a threat to moral integrity and social stability. Popular Christianity thus found itself included in the philosophical matrix which was applied to analyse the nature of popular movements in general. In this context, the perception of Christianity by the prosecuting officials was akin to that of popular Buddhism, i.e. at the lower end of morality. Evidence of lewd priests and freely mingling adolescents did little to adjust the balance to a more favourable position.

## **2. Poverty and Persecution**

The tightening of the state’s tolerance towards Christianity cannot be divorced from the popular movements menacing the Qing during the eighteenth century - mainly the spectre of the “White Lotus” (*bailian* 白蓮教). Used as an umbrella term

---

Arrow Books 1990, chapters 2 (discourse between libertine and the young monk) and 20 (regret and final redemption).

<sup>39</sup> The original letter was composed in Latin, and is kept at the Propaganda archives as SC, series III, *Cina e Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, folia 140 R/V and 142 R. It is addressed to all his superiors in the Shanxi church, and indirectly to Rome, and begins with the caption “*Ego infrascriptus sacerdos maximus peccator contra sanctitatem et excellentiam sacramentorum*” - “I, the undersigning priest, am the worst sinner against the holiness and excellence of the sacraments”. The full text can be found in Appendix 2.



applied to the diverse manifestations of millenarian Buddhism during the Ming-Qing period, “White Lotus” and similar millenarian movements attracted a substantial following from among the less privileged sections of the peasant population.<sup>41</sup> Perpetual deprivation, intensified by natural catastrophes and bad harvests facilitated the belief that the human world was nearing its end. Followers believed that the world was about to proceed from the second to its third *kalpa* - an event of cosmic dimensions which would take the world through a series of cataclysms, shattering the earth and all earthly powers.<sup>42</sup> In order to hasten the coming of the new world, and the destruction of the old order (*mojie* 末劫), the ruling dynasty was identified as the main target for military annihilation. With the Maitreya Buddha and the Eternal Venerable Mother (*wusheng laomu* 無生老母)<sup>43</sup> at one’s side, who would not emerge victorious? Even if attack implied suicide, the certainty of reward beyond the confines of the present life guaranteed an army of peasant soldiers ready to fight the Banner troops of the Qing.<sup>44</sup> The Eight Trigrams uprising of 1813, which threatened the ruling dynasty at its centre, attracted poor peasants from the border areas of the

---

<sup>40</sup> See Philip A. Kuhn, *Soulstealers*, pp. 105-107 and 115.

<sup>41</sup> Susan Naquin argues that - at least in the context of the Wang Lun uprising of 1774 - the majority of participating peasants may not have been rich, but were as unlikely to have suffered from acute starvation. See S. Naquin, *Shantung Rebellion*, pp. 50-52.

<sup>42</sup> The arrival of the Maitreya Buddha would herald the beginning of the third, so-called White Yang kalpa (*baiyang jie* 白陽劫). This future event was referred to as the “turning of the kalpa” (*yunjie* 運劫). For a detailed analysis of the role of kalpas in popular religiosity, see S. Naquin, *Shantung Rebellion*, pp. 52-59.

<sup>43</sup> On the concept of “non-birth” (*wusheng* 無生, Sanskrit: *anutpanna* / *anutpada*), see Bernard Faure, “Relics and Flesh Bodies: The Creation of Chan Pilgrimage Sites”, in: Susan Naquin and Chü-fang Yü (eds), *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites*, p. 160. In essence, “non-birth” in Mahayana (and Chan) thought is equivalent to “emptiness”. In an ultimately empty space, all phenomena are non-existent illusions - “flowers in the sky”.

<sup>44</sup> In the words of Susan Naquin: “... believer and rebel [were] merely different phases of the same salvational process.” See her *Millenarian Rebellion in China*, p. 3.

Huguang, Shaanxi and neighbouring areas - the same poor, mountainous border areas which during the same period formed the home base for China's rural Christianity.<sup>45</sup>

The poverty of these mountain areas is well documented in the missionary correspondence. A report sent to Europe by Antonio Luigi da Signa spells out the reason for the material deprivation experienced in the Shanxi / Shaanxi region. Luigi da Signa quotes "the impossible pressure caused by the land tenure contracts", which reduced the Christian peasantry to a state of doubt ("Why is God not responding to our prayers?") and intimidation, caused by rumours of the imperial prohibition of Christianity. The solution suggested by the visiting da Signa envisaged the construction of a hospital (*sanatorio*), financed in part by money transferred from the Vatican, where the local faithful could be looked after for free.<sup>46</sup>

Poverty, on the other hand, could also be regarded as a factor facilitating adherence to the Christian faith. Possibly thinking of the parable of the needle's eye, M. de S. Goldino, Bishop of Macau, praised the steadfast position of the Christian peasantry.<sup>47</sup> "At night-time", Goldino quotes Christian villagers who had been forced to flee from a local persecution, "we cry silently in the moon light because of our misfortune. We are sinful and poor, but content at the thought of being able to observe God's commandments unto our death, regardless of our poverty."<sup>48</sup> Devotion to their religion was, of course, also a feature shared by the impoverished members of other

---

<sup>45</sup> The uprising encompassed most of Zhili province and threatened Beijing itself. The appeal of inaccessible frontierland to religious movements is analysed in R. H. C. Shek, "Religion and Society", p. 307 ff. On the weakness of late imperial government in inter-provincial border areas, see also R. G. Tiedemann, "The Persistence of Banditry: Incidents in Border Districts of the North China Plain", in: *Modern China* VIII-3 (July 1982), pp. 402-404.

<sup>46</sup> See the letter by Luigi da Signa, preserved as APF file SC, series III, *Cina and Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, ff. 107-108.

<sup>47</sup> See Luke 18:25.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. APF source SOCP, *Indie Orientali*, 1806-1811, folium 37: *Nella notte in silenzio alla vista della Luna piangiamo tristi la nostra disgrazia. Noi siamo peccatori, e poveri, ma vogliamo contento osservare fino alla morte i commandamenti di Dio, ... , non ostante la nostra povertà.*

sectarian movements. The Qing state therefore treated all areas ravaged by poverty as potential hearths of sedition, focusing on “outsiders” who upset the local equilibrium by inculcating the village population with heterodox thought.<sup>49</sup>

Economic deprivation also affected the Christian community in the capital, where Christians were frequently unable to attend church services even on the cardinal holidays. Requests to interrupt their daily work on Sundays at lunch time in order to go to mass were greeted with acerbic remarks, doubting the willingness of the Christians to work. The Beijing community therefore usually resorted to observing the most important acts of Christian worship in the safety of their homes - prompting several requests for the dispensation from liturgical attendance by European clerics based in Beijing.<sup>50</sup> The Christian community in the capital area was affected most directly by changes in official attitude, and thus often acted as a barometer for the mission in the rest of the Qing empire. “The emperor is not keen on our religion; ... in a nutshell, he is suspicious of us and a thousand secret enemies are in his ear against us”, a letter written in 1728 by Gaubil to a Jesuit confrère in Paris stated.<sup>51</sup> The letter continued that due to state pressure, only a small number among his flock belonged to the elite: “Four or five petty officials and two or three literati”. This would suggest that already at the very beginning of the century of suppression, at a time when the missionary presence at the imperial court was still relatively strong, the majority of the Christian community in the capital belonged to the poorer strata - the same population targeted by other heterodox movements.

---

<sup>49</sup> The concept of *wairen* 外患 as an external threat will be the topic of the following chapter.

<sup>50</sup> Adding to the already mentioned requests by Bishop Alexander Gouvea. The letter indicating the *povertà quasi universale* of the Christians in the capital can be found in a report compiled by the Propaganda Fide in 1817 (APF SOCP, *Indie Orientali*, 1817, ff. 13 - 14).

<sup>51</sup> *L'empereur n'aime pas la Religion; ... en un mot, nous lui sommes suspects, mille ennemies secrets lui parlent contre nous*. The letter by Gaubil to P. Magnan in Paris was sent on 6 November 1726 (received 2 October 1728). Cf. Renée Simon (ed.), *Le P. Antoine Gaubil*, pp. 127-128.

### 3. *The state versus Christian “heresy”*

In his accusations against the Christian families among the elite of the Qing empire, the Manchurian minister Sunjou reiterated the following arguments which had already been pronounced in a imperial edict of 1727. Firstly, there was no need for a Christian *Lord of Heaven*, as “Heaven” (*Tian* 天) was already being worshipped, both by the Manchurians and the Han Chinese. This worship, secondly, had been passed down from the ancestors in the form of “rites” (*li* 礼). Adding foreign beliefs to this body of ancient rites would be paramount to disrespecting the rules of the ancestors, and hence of the cosmic order. Christianity thus sowed the seeds of rivalry into China’s families, separating parents from their offspring. It hence violated the celestial commandment of filial piety.<sup>52</sup> Similar misgivings are echoed in the article “Notes concerning the Transformation of Christian Churches into Temples for the Celestial Empress” by the scholar 李維 Li Wei.<sup>53</sup> Li Wei (c.1687-1738) raised five main objections against Christianity, most of which were of common currency in anti-Christian elite circles: Firstly, Li Wei argued that it was inconceivable for the Master of Heaven to have existed before Heaven itself, in all its ancient manifestations. The foreign missionaries secondly suggested that the worship of the Heavenly Master should override the veneration of one’s parents and ancestors. This was not only in complete contradiction to all Chinese customs but also illogical, as Heaven created one’s parents for the younger generation to respect, just as the missionaries reiterated the importance of respecting all of the Heavenly Master’s creation. This point thirdly

---

<sup>52</sup> See letter to R.P. Cayron (4-10-1727), in Renée Simon (ed.), *Le P. Antoine Gaubil*, pp. 152-160.

<sup>53</sup> See *Huangchao jingshi wenbian* 皇朝經世文編, volume 69, *Tianzhutang gai guanyinmiao* 天主堂蓋觀音廟, pp. 1-16

contradicted the reassurances by missionaries that in the West the bonds of loyalty between master and servant, older and younger brother, friend and friend, existed as much as they did in China. If this was true, then it was impossible that the new cult of the Heavenly Master could replace all of these time-honoured bonds without major transformations of the Chinese social body. Fourthly, Christianity taught its followers to neglect the responsibilities of everyday life, and to concentrate on transcendental arts. This irrational knowledge was transferred from the parents to their children, and then from one generation to the next. Thus, if the heretical teachings managed to permeate the Chinese family system completely, all notions of filial piety and of correct social order would be corrupted. Finally, once confused by the notions of this heretical religion, the younger ones would abandon their homes in order to spread their religion and to serve others. In doing so, they would follow the example of the foreign missionaries themselves, leaving behind their responsibilities as fathers and sons, risking their health and lives to cross the oceans in order to spread heretical ideas, to take advantage of China's riches and to gain fame for themselves. Hence his argument that all Christian churches be transformed into Temples for the Celestial Empress (*Tianhou* 天後fZ), as this would constitute an economical and efficient way of inculcating orthodox morality into the minds of the common people.<sup>54</sup>

The doctrinal definitions of the scholar-official elite, such as the outspoken opinions of Li Wei, counted very heavily, as they represented the interpretation of the state administration of its own role in state and society. In the imperial Chinese tradition, only the state had the power and organisational strength to set parameters for doctrine, as - in contrast to Islam and Christianity outside China - there were no

---

<sup>54</sup> The ideas of Li Wei, an early Qing scholar, are exemplary of the long tradition of anti-Christian refutation. For more details on Li Wei, see Hummel, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period*, pp. 720-

religious institutions with all-embracing authority. Confucianism never developed into an independent religious tradition, but aligned itself as faithful servant of the state; as the focus of state rituals it became the religious dimension of the state itself. Under Confucian influence, the state regarded it as its main responsibility to rule over as well as to educate the common people, while “protecting” the uneducated people from corrupting thought. Consequently, religious groups acting from outside the parameters set by the state had to be prevented from growing into entities strong enough to rival the state in authority.<sup>55</sup> The difference between “orthodox” and “heretical” was hence to be found in the *perception* of religious movements by the state officials, the religious dimension of a religious movement always being subordinate to its political significance.<sup>56</sup> The state saw its role in limiting the unchecked proliferation of mass movements of any type, rather than understanding and sanctioning their beliefs. The crux was hence whether or not a new movement submitted itself to the religious suzerainty of a religious institution backed by the imperial administration. Groupings which escaped this categorisation, whether Buddhist or Christian, were largely perceived by the investigating officials as being cast out of the same mould. The language of their allegations against heterodox communities fitted well into this pattern.

Officials were puzzled by the growth of Christian communities during the century of repression. Memorials recommending government action against Christian communities often begin with the dramatising statement “The number of followers of

---

721.

<sup>55</sup> See Christian Jochim, *Chinese Religions: A Cultural Perspective*, Englewood Cliffs / New Jersey: Prentice-Hall 1986, p. 77.

<sup>56</sup> Professor Ma Xisha observed that “the difference between popular religion and orthodox religion ... is mainly political, not religious.” Cf. Ma Xisha and Han Bingfang, *Zhongguo minjian zongjiaoshi*, p. 3.

the Christian religion has increased throughout the province”.<sup>57</sup> The increase in the number of confessing Christians during the latter eighteenth century is confirmed by missionary calculations from the first two decades of the following century. In a letter sent to the Propaganda Fide in 1806, the Apostolic Vicar for Sichuan Dufresse reported on the grave consequences of the ongoing persecution. Yet, he stressed, the missionary statistics - 1134 new baptisms as opposed to 1139 deceased adult Christians - merely ceased to increase - at least in Sichuan. And despite the “growing timidity and increasing insecurity” among the converts, the overall figure of active adults participating in the sacraments continued to go up.<sup>58</sup> Moreover, the persecutions were not carried out with equal determination in all district magistratures, and merely affected those aspects of Christian life which could not be carried out in the privacy of one’s home. Another piece of missionary correspondence states that petty officials and yamen runners (*satellites*) were excluded from the direct implementation of the persecutions since they were regarded as prone to extortion and unnecessary violence.<sup>59</sup> We hear excerpts from the Vicar Apostolic’s letter, which seem to confirm the non-systematic character of the anti-Christian state action:

We now all enjoy peace and tranquillity, just as before. The faithful can practise their religion safely at home, and the missionaries can look after their office publicly and without fear: Our religion may thus not be legally

---

<sup>57</sup> As in the memorial of 1807 on the Christian village of Sanggu 桑古 (FHA, scroll 9258, original document 501, sub-numbers 16 and 17). Not all regions participated in the general increase in conversion figures. The Jiangnan, for instance, witnessed a clearly negative development - a situation which would stay unchanged until the establishment of Shanghai as a Treaty Port. See K. S. Latourette, *A History of Christian Missions*, pp. 3-5. Johannes Beckmann, based on the aggregate of individual counts by (Western) missionaries at the beginning of the nineteenth century, estimates the total number of Christians in China at circa 221,000. See Johannes Beckmann, “Die Lage der katholischen Missionen in China um 1815”, in: *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft* II (1946), p. 221.

<sup>58</sup> See APF SC, series III, *Cina e Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, ff. 207-208. But given the dramatic demographic expansion of the time, the modest ‘increase’ appears more as a sign of relative decline.

<sup>59</sup> Letter by Denis Chaumont to M. Boiret in Paris, sent from London on 26 October 1806, and kept at the APF as document SC, series III, *Cina et Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, folium 194 (continuation of folium 167, same volume).

permitted, but it seems to be tolerated by all. Nobody among the faithful is fearful of the mentioned persecutions or the rumours of persecutions, as those who are called by the officials to court are but few in number. [Of these Christians] some are strong in their faith, preferring prison and tribulations to apostasy, or even death....; others are weak ... turn their back on their faith in front of the officials, ... begging to go home and to lead a sinful life just as before.<sup>60</sup>

Though the archival evidence strongly suggests that a majority of scholar officials during the mid-Qing were sceptical towards Christianity, some remembered the contributions of the Jesuits, and hence judged their religion in a more positive light. Gong Zizhen 龔子珍 (1792-1841), an influential disciple of the reformer Liu Fenglu 劉鳳祿 (1776-1829) and remembered for his opposition against the British opium trade, composed a poem which mentioned Jesus - in the same breath as the Tibetan reformer Tsongkha-pa.<sup>61</sup> A less accidental example is probably the famous historical outline study by the eighteenth century official Zhao Yi 趙翼, who dedicated a whole chapter to Christianity as well as other “universally established”

---

<sup>60</sup> Letter by Dufresse, APF SC, series III, *Cina e Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, folium 208 R. The relevant passage in full: *Atque ita causam finitam esse a multo jam tempore ubique de hoc religione ... negotio siletur, eadem que prosus ac antea pace et tranquillitate gaudemus omnes, fideles privatis suis exertiis eadem securitate, et aperte missionerii vero absque timore sed caute suo ministerio vacant: Religio quidam non permittitur, sed omnia tolerata videtur. Ex fidelibus quos, inter praedictas persecutiones aut persecutionem rumores, nimius terror invasit, vel quia praefectis ad tribunal evocati sunt pauci simul numero, alii quidem se constantes in fide exhiberunt, supplicia et carceres potius perferentes quasi ejurare et ex his unus pluribus mensibus in carcere detentus, multos in extremis mori protulit, quam apportare: alii vero pro timore ac debilitate vel tabellam religionis absconderunt, ne inquietarentur, vel coram praefectis ore ex scripto abjurarunt, ut se supliciis eximerent, ..., ac domum reversi et poenitentes adhuc sic prius profitentur. Caeterum Deus tanta horum neophitorum fragilitatis misertus, ..., ne forte pauci starent, fidesque multorum labefacterentur; su vindictam, autem, ut videtur, sua Religionis impugnate, famen, pertem, exundationes aliasque calamitates immisit in populos, quae multos provinciae locis magnam vastitatem attulerunt; nuper vero in provincia Xen si gravissima orta in militum ipsorum rebellio, quae huic sutchuensi non leviter imminere videtur. Deus det nobis suam pacem.* Furthermore about the missionary schools in Sichuan: *Scholae [Chris]tianae utriusque sexus in eodem statu adhuc perseverant, nec tota persecutionis tempora fuerunt intermissa, eo quod nec Regimen publicum de iis quidam curari videbatur, nec privati gentiles eas ullatensis inquietabant, nec [Chris]tianitates in quibus sunt constitutae, ullum circa illas timorem praeferebant. Sunt autem hoc anno 24. numero pro pueris, et 36. pro puellis, et in quatuor provinciae partibus dispersae.*

<sup>61</sup> Mentioned in T. H. Barrett, “Ignorance and the Technology of Information”, p. 23.



religions.<sup>62</sup> His chapter begins with a sequence revealing the author's interest in the history of civilisations outside China:

The majority of countries in Europe adhere to Christianity. The Master of Heaven Jesus was born in Judea, formerly part of the Roman Empire. His [doctrine] travelled west to be spread throughout Europe. Its beginnings can be calculated to the Geng Sheng, or second year of the Yuanshou 元壽 reign period, during the rule of the Han emperor Ai 哀.<sup>63</sup>

The author continues with a description of Matteo Ricci's work and his reception at court, the reasons for the initial support by the Ming and Qing emperors and the ultimate attack by the court officials. Stopping short of sheer eulogy, Zhao Yi described Christianity as "the fourth of the great religions on earth" (第四大教).

Whereas the Han literati remained relatively free to convert to Christianity, the Manchurian elite was bound by a strict interpretation of earlier prohibitions. Since Christianity had by the middle of the eighteenth century become a thoroughly (Han) Chinese phenomenon, this may well be interpreted as an attempt by the Manchurian dynasty to reverse the process of cultural assimilation which was quickly encroaching upon China's Manchurians. Adherence of Manchurian Banner troops to Christian communities remained, in fact, forbidden throughout the entire period of repression. The following document demonstrates that Christian soldiers of the Han Banners were

---

<sup>62</sup> *Ershier shizhaji* 二十世紀, first published in 1799 by Zhao Yi 趙翼 (1727-1815, alias Zhao Oubei 趙邨 and Yun Song 袁松 or 袁松 ), reprinted by [Taipei:] *Shixue chubanshe* 十學出版社 1974. The relevant passage can be found on pp. 790-791.

<sup>63</sup> 元壽 reign period extended from 2 BC to 1 AD, its *gengshen* 庚申 year coinciding accurately with year 1 AD.

65 The original text of the FHA document (scroll 9260, original document 498, sub-number 37):

306

the elimination of “subversive elements” in the armed forces. From the middle of the 1790s, right up to the moment of issuing the memorial, Eledengbao had encountered a similar threat during the campaigns against the White Lotus. The success of the ruthless suppression of the insurrection rested entirely on the total control of the military leadership over the lives of their troops.<sup>67</sup> “Secret” cults were therefore put on a par with “subversive” cults, and had to be eradicated from the Banner armies at any price. In a memorial relating to the confession by Colonel Tong Lan, Eledengbao deplores the “secret practising of western teachings, emphasising the moral responsibility Tong Lan held over his subordinates. The refusal to turn his back on the secret cult led the veteran commander to request permission to demote and punish Tong Lan and two of his subordinates.<sup>68</sup> What made the matter far more serious for the representatives of the state was the discovery that virtually his whole clan professed to be Christians too - most of whom were being employed by the cavalry of the same Banner.<sup>69</sup> Mentioning the cavalry officers Tong Hengshan by name, a list of twenty-three brothers, uncles and nephews stood accused of “secretly practising the western religion”, of having rejected the enlightening instructions of their superiors, and of wittingly persisting in their unlawful sectarian affiliation. Seeing that several of their kinsmen were still in their teens (*youngling* 少年), the commanders offered to spare at least those who felt that they did not actually practise the religion, despite following the teachings of their ancestors. Only after this last act of commiseration

---

<sup>67</sup> As to Eledengbao’s role in the suppression of popular movements, see de Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution*, p. 362.

<sup>68</sup> See the memorial of 9/5/1805 by Eledengbao 額勒登保, Guang Xing 廣興, Pusabao 普薩保 and Fusejianecha 傅塞堅額, filed at the FHA, scroll 9260, original document 498, sub-number 39. The memorial is entitled “Secret Practising of the Western religion by the vice-commander Li Qingxi” [subordinate of Captain Tong Lan] 副都統李慶錫私習西教. A related edict can be found in Wang Zhichun, *Qingchao rouyuan ji*, pp. 150-151.

had failed, did the high commanders recommend that all relatives be tried by the Board of Punishment.<sup>70</sup>

In a second edict five months later, the Jiaqing emperor imposed severe restrictions on the immigration of foreigners from Macau: Traders apart, no foreigners were allowed to cross the demarcation line into the empire. This provision was specifically aimed at missionaries, and can be interpreted as the direct result of P. Adeodato's attempt to send his map to Europe via Macau.<sup>71</sup> It should not, on the other hand, be seen as an isolated act of official vengeance against Christianity - other movements threatened the internal peace of the empire, which caused the Qing to act relentlessly against developments escaping the state officials' control. The consequences of the concerted drive against Christian communities during the first decades of the nineteenth century are evidenced by reports of successful state action - for instance in a memorial submitted by the governor-general of the Huguang double-province Ma Huiyu 馬惠宇 in the year 1814.<sup>72</sup> The governor-general, revealing a sense of triumphant vindication, presented the memorial together with the spoils of his campaign: "Scrolls of scriptures, pictures and sculptures from the homes of simple-

<sup>69</sup> A memorial submitted on the same day by Eledengbao 額爾登保 et al. also mentions the senior officer Li Qingxi 李清錫 and male members of his clan. See FHA, scroll 9260, original document 498, sub-number 39, frames 750-751.

<sup>70</sup> Eledengbao et al., 9/5/1805 (FHA, scroll 9260, original document 498, sub-number 39, frames 751-752): "The infantry battalion has been blessed with many young soldiers ... Of these eight, young and old, were asked if they secretly were Christians ("belonged to the Western religion"). All those who really did not practise the teachings were asked to step out and report. Those cadets who had the gall to adhere to the illegal teachings, and who persisted in their mistaken ways despite repeated adhortations and instructions, only in exceptional cases of commiseration [should they not] ... be demoted and brought to justice?" (馬惠宇奏為剿辦逆裔等因事等因奉 旨 著照所請該部知道欽此)

<sup>71</sup> Jiaqing 11/11/10 (31/12/1805). See "Veritable Records of the Jiaqing Emperor", vol. 152, reprinted in Zhang Ze, *Qingdai jinjiaoqi de tianzhujiao*, p. 153.

<sup>72</sup> See the memorial by Ma Huiyu 馬惠宇, JQ 19/9/12, i.e. 24/10/1814, FHA, scroll 8875, original document 2750, sub-number 7, frames 1944 - 1952. The document is entitled "Request for mercy by



they were unable to read the scriptures introduced by their ancestors, and that they had merely followed the instructions in the Christian creed their parents had passed on to them. There was no desire to contravene any laws, nor was the incentive “sectarian” (*shejiao chuantu* 邪教傳圖) or “financial” (*yuqian* 預錢). Though the villagers had made themselves liable for “congregating crowds and hoarding alien scriptures” (*jiren jiaozhong* 聚人教中, *cang jing-yi* 藏經異), the governor concluded, they had shown their remorse by apologising for their trespasses, and by parting with their “alien scriptures, scrolls and statues”, all of which were now “ready to be destroyed”.<sup>76</sup> It is difficult to assess whether we see a true apostasy or a last-minute attempt to escape persecution, but in either case it seems evident that the local Christians had lost the insight into the faith which their parents had still possessed. Clinging on to the fragments of their parents’ beliefs, material or as part of their collective memory, seemed innocuous while life carried on without major challenges. Whether the villagers were prepared to defy the stance of the state officials in this case is a question the archives leave unanswered.

To the prosecuting state officials, the religious identity of the interrogated villagers was secondary to their role as originators of social unrest. The sources consulted in this chapter suggest that the state attempted to prevent two potential scenarios: Firstly, in order to retain control over the empire as such it was of paramount importance to preserve the stability of local society. In an unprecedented attempt to establish their imprint on China’s rural districts, the Kangxi, Yongzheng and Qianlong administrations propagated a neo-Confucian ideal to the commoners in the empire which was both socio-moral as well as political. Moral propriety was seen

---

<sup>76</sup> See memorial by Ma Huiyu, JQ 19/9/12, i.e. 24/10/1814, FHA, scroll 8875, original document 2750, sub-number 7, frame 1952.

as the panacea against social deviancy and political unrest. The mission of the state was aimed at the hearts of the very same villagers who were being courted by heterodox movements of varying identity.<sup>77</sup> The spread of Christian communities throughout the eighteenth century was thus interpreted as part of a groundswell of disobedience against the keepers of orthodoxy, a veritable menace to the basis of social and political order in the Qing empire. Secondly, and in more concrete terms, popular religious teachings always harboured the danger of fostering uncontrollable mass movements, which might at a later point serve as a recruitment ground for armed opposition to Qing rule. The interrogators' standard repertoire thus always included questions concerning the organisational hierarchy and mode of congregating for their cultic activities. The Christians encountered in our sources seem to have been well aware of the state officials' concerns, and routinely replied that their meetings were "private" in nature, without attempting to establish a paid (thus official) organisational superstructure. Increasingly, during the course of the eighteenth century, the authorities underlined their commitment to the preservation of the status quo, by including the Christian communities in their list of "heretical" movements, and by meting out punitive action as was seen fit for the sake of containing the proliferation of criminal movements within the realm. Whereas the present chapter highlighted the state's perception of Christianity as an "internal" phenomenon, the following one will illustrate that the characterisation of Chinese Christianity as a "foreign" religion continued throughout the century of prohibition. This perception waxed and waned with the presence of foreign nationals in the empire and - at the beginning of the

---

<sup>77</sup> Susan Naquin, on the other hand, believes that White Lotus "sectarians" were relatively "unheterodox" (quotation marks by Naquin) in comparison with China's Christians. This conclusion is based on the statement by a Qing official (recorded in the *Waijidang* 外紀彙編, Jiaqing 16/4/14, i.e. 1813), reporting on the unorthodox behaviour of Christians. See Susan Naquin, "Transmission of White Lotus Sectarianism", p. 290.

nineteenth century - amassing outside its borders. The chapter begins by introducing the position of foreign missionaries at the end of the Kangxi period, and by outlining the consequences of the Yongzheng edict for Western nationals. The focus, however, is on the infiltration of foreign traders and missionaries in the decades after Macartney's embassy to the Qing throne.<sup>78</sup> While the emphasis of this thesis has been on the conditions created by the relative absence of missionaries, the following chapter will concentrate on the increasing presence of Western missionaries towards the end of missionary prohibition. The increased control over rites and theological content would, effectively if gradually, bring the first stage of the development of indigenous Christianity to a halt.

---

<sup>78</sup> Foreigners arrested by Qing guards were all classified as belonging to either of these two categories. The increasing number of traders, in particular in the decades leading up to the Opium War, would lead to a change in the official perception of foreigners. For a general overview of the early phase of China's penetration by European traders and their perception by the local population in Guangdong, see F. Wakeman, *Strangers at the Gate*, pp. 52-58.



## Chapter 10: Christianity as alien intrusion

Far from bringing the missionary enterprise of the Catholic orders to an end, the Yongzheng edict effectively forced Christian missionaries underground. Imperial law put even non-believers who granted an abode to the itinerant preachers at peril, thus imposing a formidable degree of social isolation on the “soldiers of Christ” during the eighteenth century.<sup>1</sup> More concerned with the task of preserving the internal stability of society and of the Banner troops than with the concept of an acute military threat by foreign powers, the Qing authorities attempted to nip the emergence of internal unrest in its bud by preventing “outsiders” from disrupting the peaceful agricultural life of local society. Archival evidence illustrating violations of the prohibition to leave Macau for locations in the Chinese heartland can be found sporadically throughout the eighteenth century, but only in isolated instances was the presence of foreign missionaries interpreted as an offence worthy of direct central government involvement. As already mentioned, the region where the imperial edict against foreign missionary activity was first implemented was the province of Fujian. The link between the foreign origins of Christianity and the Christian communities on shore was still self-evident. After all, Fujian had been one of the most obvious entrepôts for missionaries and merchants alike. The following statement, commenting on the final moments of converts condemned to death, hence reads very naturally: “The three catechists could still hear their sentence, to die by the sword because of having embraced the religion of the Portuguese, which reveres Christ”.<sup>2</sup> The tolerance

---

<sup>1</sup> See B. Willeke, *Imperial Government*, pp. 17 and 115-117.

<sup>2</sup> Same source, folium 126. The Italian version: *I tre Catechisti ancora sentirono la loro sentenza di morir decapitati per aver' abbracciato la Legge de' Portughesi, che adora Cristo.*

threshold against Chinese collaborators with the foreign intruders was therefore very low - as it was, outside the capital area, towards the foreigners themselves.

The following discovery of European missionaries in the Fuan Prefecture 福州府, Fujian Province, in the year 1746 can be taken as case in point.<sup>3</sup> The European Pedro Sanz, OP (Baiduolu 白多禄), together with five of his confrères, had landed on the shores of the Qing empire in order to find followers for his religious ideas. The province had long-since gained a reputation as a magnet for mendicant Christian monks, who were opposed to the strategy of accommodation practised by the Jesuits. Instead of attempting to convince the social and political elite, the mendicants targeted deprived villagers, offering the prospect of metaphysical justice where material conditions denied all solace in this world. Their main competitors, in official eyes, were hence not primarily the Confucian scholar officials sent by the state, but fellow millenarians of Buddhist extraction, such as the Luo sect.<sup>4</sup> The Europeans were found guilty of erecting churches (*qigai tianzhutang* 乞改天主堂), of

“confusing the simple-minded” (*shanhuo yumin* 煽惑愚民), and of spreading heresy through “congregating the crowds and chanting scriptures” (*juzhong songjing* 聚众诵经) - activities which had been explicitly prohibited through imperial legislation. The more than 130 converts in the district had thus not only violated Qing law (*ketiao* 戒条), but also contributed to the immersion of aliens into the provinces of the Jiangnan - and maybe even further into the southern heartland, which was still

---

<sup>3</sup> The following observations are extracted from a memorial by the Manchurian governor general for the Jiangnan, Gioro Yarhashan 高罗彦, dated 11 October 1746. It is entitled "Request for exceptional harshness in the treatment of the illegal Western religion" (*Qing shen-jin xiyangjiao teyan zhizui* 清神进西洋教特严治罪), and can be found at the FHA, scroll 9258, original document 492, sub-number 3, frames 289-292.

<sup>4</sup> The remark by the Manchurian official underlines that Christianity was by now regarded as part of a tide of “heretical” movements, threatening to disrupt the empire’s social peace. *Ibidem*, frame 290.



stability of the coastal provinces - which were still recovering from the coastal evacuation against anti-Qing forces at sea and on Taiwan.<sup>7</sup>

The concept of “outsiders”, in terms of territorial (*waidiren* 外夷人) or social affinity (*wairen* 外民), encompassed both Chinese subjects from other provinces and foreign individuals. Europeans - by law restricted in their choice of domicile to Beijing and Macau - were usually referred to as “Persons from the Western Oceans” (*xiyangren* 西洋人), though the term “alien” (*yi* 夷) is frequently used in official sources.<sup>8</sup> Outside influence was regarded as contrary to government efforts to stabilise society, one of the prime concerns of the early Qing rulership. Here we face a contradiction: Judgements on the involvement of “outsiders” (*waidiren*) had to be passed by officials who were by definition themselves “outsiders”: Firstly as city-based *wairen* confined to the scholar-official elite, and secondly as perfect strangers to their administrative area, having been despatched from their remote home provinces as part of the “Law of Avoidance”. Nevertheless, one of the standard methods of discrediting sectarian movements was to cite the involvement of such “aliens” - as an attempt to poison the otherwise tranquil ways of the local population. The most poignant examples include the Taitian 太田 and Sansheng 三聖 communities, as well as the LuoJiao tradition.<sup>9</sup> Fears of outsiders exporting seditious thinking also influenced the perception of Christian communities by the authorities. Throughout the period of prohibition, Christianity was pejoratively

---

<sup>7</sup> An edict of JQ 19/11 (December 1814), citing the discovery of the Briton Staunton (Sidangdong 司當洞) within the borders of Guangdong province, emphasises the increasing defensiveness of the Qing state. It also served as a reminder to the Qing that the attempts of 1805 and 1811 to curtail contacts between the foreign missionaries and the Chinese Christians of the provinces were far from successful. For the full text see Wang Zhichun, *Qingchao rouyuan ji*, p. 164.

<sup>8</sup> The debate concerning the correct translation of *yi* 夷 (often translated as “barbarian”) reflects Western confusion over Chinese claims of cultural superiority. The crux of the debate is whether the term should be interpreted as pejorative or neutral in meaning. For a detailed analysis of the debate, see Frank Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China*, pp. 8-10.

referred to as the “foreign religion” (*xi*)*yangjiao* (西洋教) 西洋教, although direct foreign influence could only be proven in exceptional cases.<sup>10</sup> The term should therefore be taken with a pinch of salt, except for instances when direct participation by European nationals could be proven. Owing to the increase in commercial activities and in the colonial ambitions of European naval powers, the beginning of the nineteenth century witnessed the reimmersion of foreigners into China. The imperial administration hence saw itself confronted with an increasing challenge from “beyond the seas” - which bestowed the pejorative term for Christianity with a new sense of originality. Contemporary missionary correspondence seems to confirm this observation. Commenting on the wave of persecutions carried out by imperial decree between 1805 and 1811, a report corroborated by the Propaganda Fide on the situation of the missions in China at the beginning of the new century highlights the differences in the quality of the new persecutions.<sup>11</sup> No longer were Christians merely regarded as “sectarians” (*setta malveggia*, i.e. *xiejiao* 邪教), but actively punished for following a “foreign religion”. This, according to the Propaganda report, set the current persecutions apart from those of the preceding Qianlong period, which justified its anti-Christian action as part of the drive against “heresy”.<sup>12</sup>

For most of the eighteenth century, the “illegal penetration” by European missionaries from the coastal provinces was relatively simple to address for the Qing

---

<sup>9</sup> See *Shiliao xunkan* 史料旬刊, section ‘Heaven’ 天, volume 12, pp. 373-376.

<sup>10</sup> Examples for this observation can be found in a memorial on rural Christianity from 1806. Cf. FHA, scroll 9258, original document 408, sub-number 12. Another document from the same year (“Palace Memorials Approved by the Emperor’s Hand” (*zhupi zhousze* 摺片奏摺), category ‘Religious Affairs’ (*zongjiao shiwulei* 宗教事務類), document number 4 explicitly excludes any influence by foreigners. It does, on the other hand, list the names of Christians of Shaanxi origin actively involved in the spreading of Christianity in Sichuan. Daniel Bays holds the same opinion for Chinese Christianity during the nineteenth century. See Daniel Bays, “Christianity and the Chinese Sectarian Tradition”, p. 33.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. APF source SOCP, *Indie Orientali*, 1817, ff. 9 - 16. Folium 11 V refers specifically to as to why the current persecutions focused on foreign nationals in particular.

<sup>12</sup> Here referred to as the Qianlong policy against “Perverted Sects” (*sette perverse*).

<sup>14</sup> QL 11/8/2, viz. 16 September 1746, by Jiang Bing (FHA, scroll 9258, original document 493, sub-number 26, frames 369-375). It is entitled: "Acknowledged report of testimony concerning Fu Zuolin" (Fu Zuolin shiyan gao). The case is also mentioned in Ma Zhao, *Shilun Qianlong shiqi (1736-1796) chajin tianzhujiao shijian*, p. 43 as an example of missionaries illegally transporting scriptures and sacred objects from the capital and Macau to the Christian communities of the interior.

318

imperial capital, and that they followed their elder Liu Ying'er 劉英'兒.<sup>16</sup> The testimony of “simple villager” Liu was used to extract information about foreign missionaries, who themselves - as long as they were not caught outside the perimeters of the capital - enjoyed the protection of the imperial court. The officials thus gained insight into the links that existed between the “official” churches of the capital and the Christian communities in towns and villages. When cases of collusion between foreign missionaries and local Christians were discovered, official punitive action found no obstacles in its treatment of Chinese Christians. A memorial from the year 1754 describes the inhabitants of a Christian village in Zhili province as “religious criminals” (*jiaofei* 教匪), who - aided by the foreign priests in Beijing - incited a couple of thousand local villagers to rise up against the dynasty. The outer symbols of their belief were ordered destroyed, their leaders arrested and physically punished. Moreover, in this case the desired name registers could be produced, which led to the punishment of more than twenty Christian families.<sup>17</sup>

Whenever, as in the above example, foreigners were involved in “seditious” activities, the official propaganda would seize on the fact as an example of *waidiren* intruding into the well-ordered lives of rural China. Memorials and edicts commenting on such cases would usually cite the appropriate passages of the Yongzheng edict in order to underline where the foreigners had overstepped the limits set by the imperial government. In reality, the majority of Christian missionaries active by the end of the eighteenth century were indeed Chinese nationals, or at least “Chinese” in origin - since increasing numbers had undergone missionary training in European outposts in

---

<sup>16</sup> The rural districts mentioned are Qingwan 清灣 and Daxing 大興.

<sup>17</sup> See FHA, scroll 9258, original document 493, sub-number 30, frames 380-381. The official's name is Fang Fucheng 方福成, the village in Zhili province is a certain Shouying 壽英[?]. The date is QL 19/5/23, i.e. 12/7/1754.

Asia (Philippines, Macau, Malacca) or in Europe (Naples).<sup>18</sup> The correspondence composed by European missionaries usually refers to these Chinese priests by their baptismal “Christian” names - either in the Latin spelling or in a Romance variant - together with a romanised version of their Chinese family name. The four priests active in Sichuan around the year 1767 were the indefatigable missionary Andrew Ly, as well as Luc Ly, Matthew Kou and Thomas Nien.<sup>19</sup> For the year 1806 alone, we learn of “old guns”, such as Carolus Tan (Shanxi), Camillo Ciao (Shaanxi), Giuseppe Li (Hang Ciong Fu?) and Josephus Ly (*alias* Petrus Zai).<sup>20</sup> We also read about novices “imported” from abroad, such as Paolo Vang (Naples), who were bolstering their locally-raised compatriots. Young missionaries, for instance Giacomo Li, Franciscus Zen and Silvestro Ho, are described as being full of evangelical zeal but lacking in experience.<sup>21</sup> More mature priests, of the calibre of a Mattia or Pietro Vang and Philippus Li, were ready to offer guidance to their nascent successors, though often not without “teething problems”. The disputes surrounding headstrong characters such as Mauro Li and Paulo Van have already been mentioned. A letter of 1806 by Alexandre Gouvea, Bishop of Beijing, to Cardinal Borgia, refers to Simon Fan, the “bête noire” of the Chinese clergy. A native of his apostolic diocese of Shanxi, the twenty-year old Simon Fan experienced serious problems with his supposed role as a spiritual model to his flock. Unable to withstand the pressure, the *alumnus* was ejected

---

<sup>18</sup> See Adolfo Tamburello, “Partenze e arrivi degli alunni del Collegio de’ Cinesi di Napoli nell’anno 1785”, in: F. D’Arelli and A. Tamburello, *La Missione Cattolica in Cina*, pp. 273-281.

<sup>19</sup> See Léonide Guiot, *La Mission du Su-tchuen au XVIII<sup>me</sup> siècle*, p. 225. Andrew Li died some seven years later, on 23 January 1774. See also F. Bontinck, *La lutte autour de la liturgie chinoise*, p. 366, note 73.

<sup>20</sup> Mentioned in the letter by A. Luigi da Signa, *Puhuo*, Shanxi 7 March 1806, APF SC, series III, *Cina et Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, folium 107 V, together with reports on European missionaries active in the provinces of Shanxi and Shaanxi.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. the brief report on the state of the mission in Shanxi, preserved as APF SC, series III, *Cina et Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, folium 138. See also the remarks by Dufresse for Sichuan: Bad Latin and restrictions in the biblical knowledge of the novices was compensated for by the willingness, zeal and humility of the students, APF SC, series III, *Cina et Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, ff. 207-208.



from his missionary field and fled to Gouvea in Beijing, in order to request his intervention. When the limits of the bishop's influence became clear to Simon Fan, he requested to be dismissed from his missionary duties.<sup>22</sup>

These examples demonstrate that the “alien creed” often showed few signs of direct foreign influence.<sup>23</sup> On the contrary, the internal dynamics of Christianity seems almost entirely analogous to the descriptions of “indigenous” cults. This becomes obvious when official Qing reports involving the missionary activities of “outsiders” are consulted, and differences in the description of Chinese and Western *waidiren* shrink into insignificance. A case in point is the memorial by Fang Weidian 方维甸, Governor of Shaanxi Province.<sup>24</sup> The text mentions indigenous Christian clerics (*shenfu* 神父) by name, accusing them of forming a channel to Christians in Sichuan and Shandong. The “aliens” in this case were Christians from Sichuan province, under the spiritual leadership of a Liu Biye 刘比叶. Having moved to Shaanxi by the year 1784, the missionaries from Sichuan established links with the well-known local Christian Liu Ximan 刘希满 (Simon Liu). In the official account, the Chinese missionaries stand accused of “enticing the rural simpletons” of Shaanxi. The official leaves no doubt that the Christians had upset the local order by entering the Shaanxi countryside as “aliens”. Let us contrast this stereotypical description with the account of the detention of four Western “aliens” in an earlier document. The foreigners bear the Chinese names of Zhang Ruose 张若瑟<sup>25</sup>, Liu Manuo 刘满诺 [Manuel de Viegas, 1713 - 1768], Li Ruose 李若瑟 [José Pereira, 1674 -

---

<sup>22</sup> The letter is dated 20 October 1806 and can be found in the APF as SC, series III, *Cina et Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, ff. 165-166.

<sup>23</sup> Ma Zhao comes to the same conclusion. See his “Shilun Qianlong shiqi (1736-1796) chajin tianzhujiao shijian”, p. 46.

<sup>24</sup> FHA, scroll 9261, original document 503, sub-number 39, dated JQ 10/1C6/16 (10/8/1805).

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*.

1731] and Gong An-duo-ni 公安多尼 [José de Araújo, 1721 - 1774].<sup>26</sup> The four were held accused of “clandestinely entering the interior for the sake of proselytising and distributing religious tracts” (*qianru zhongtu chuan-jiao you-shujing* 前入中土傳教游書經). Having entered Qing territory through the province of Guangdong, they quickly headed for the wealthy markets of the Jiangnan - the old heartland of Chinese Christianity. Stirring up unrest in an area already beset by sectarian uproar, the missionaries were accused of “tricking people into their faith with magical tricks” (*yi huanshu you-ren ru-jiao* 以幻術誘人入教), and of “agitating and confusing people’s minds” (*shanhuo renxin* 煽惑人心). Their “machinations” included treacherous stories about the [spiritual] “cleansing properties of magic water and wine” (*yi shui jiu qu qi qingjing* 以水酒祛其清經 - obviously an allusion to the Eucharist), as well as of the notion of being able to “ascend to heaven through the chanting of hymns” (*song-jing sheng-tian* song 經 升 天). For this purpose, the missionaries made use of printed materials to propagate their beliefs, by “sending letters” and by “distributing cultic pamphlets” (*ji shuxin* 寄書信 ... *san zhaidan* 散 札 單). Assisted by local Christian communities, the missionaries used the waterways and country lanes of the Jiangnan and of Fujian, the hills of Zhejiang and Jiangxi, and the commercial routes of

<sup>25</sup> The name of the foreigner could not be verified, though *Ruose* is the commonly used baptismal name for “Joseph”.

<sup>26</sup> Memorial dated 26 July 1754, by E Rong’an 鄂爾岡 et al. (FHA, scroll 9258, original document 492, sub-number 8, frames 299-302). It is entitled: “Legal recommendations concerning the case against the Christians Zhang Ruose, *et alii*” (□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□). The memorial is preceded by two brief reports (12 May 1754 and 26 June 1754) to the throne, composed by Lin Junlong 林俊龍 and He Nian 何年, respectively. These reports state in terse style the arrest of the foreign missionaries, and the complicity of the arrested Christian villagers, and bear the FHA sequel numbers 5-7. Ma Zhao briefly mentions the case (memorial by Governor General of the Yangtse double province E Rong’an 鄂爾岡 and also the above-mentioned memorial by the Jiangsu circuit official Zhuang Yougong 莊有恭 of QL 19/5/29 (18/7/1754), scroll 9258, number 9) in order to illustrate the stiffening resolve of the state to deal with the increasing number of Christians in parts of the Jiangnan. See Ma Zhao, *Shilun Qianlong shiqi (1736-1796) chajin tianzhujiao shijian*, p. 27. The identity of the foreign priests was reconstructed with the help of L. Pfister, *Notices biographiques et bibliographiques*

Guangdong to enter the heartland. So far, the only element which sets this report apart from the previous description of Chinese missionary activity is the very mention of the term “Western” (*xiyang* 西洋) in conjunction with the mentioned missionaries. Otherwise, the official report provides no proof for the assumption that there was a qualitative difference between the missionary activity of Han and European outsiders. The testimony of the main defendant, Zhang Ruose, further underlines this observation:

The defendant Zhang Ruose 張若瑟 gave the following testimony: ‘I come from Lusitania in the West, and am at present 33 years of age. In the sixth month of year sixteen in the Qianlong era [i.e. during the period of 23/7 - 20/8 1751] I left the West for the cathedral of Macau. In the second month of Qianlong 17 [i.e. between 16/3 and 13/4 1752], Bishop Ji Leisi 吉列西 ordered the Dageng District 大坑口 resident Xie Wenshan 謝文珊 and the Macanese Xu Fangjige 許芳吉格 to accompany me and Liu Manuo 劉滿奴, to head for Songjiang 松江 by means of the waterways. There I lived and entertained regular contacts with the families of Zhou Jingyun 周景雲, Wu Xizhou 吳錫周, Ni Dezai 倪德宰, Huang Yuchen 黃玉臣, Wu Xiangsheng 吳向生, Xu Chengjiu 許成九 and Zhuang Wuguan 莊五官. I also travelled on the boat of Xu Shengtong 許盛通, which I used for religious purposes. Our silver money had borne interest in Macau. Of this amount I and Liu Manuo took five hundred ounces, which we distributed among the Christians by way of Shen Madou 申麻豆. And then there were two lots of silver coins from Macau, also worth five hundred ounces, which we intended to use for clothes and for food, and which we gave into the care

---

*sur les Jésuites de la ancienne mission de Chine*, Shanghai 1932-34, and following suggestions by R.G. Tiedemann.

of Wang Qinyi 王勤伊. Via Wang Qinyi, we paid for accommodation, transport by boat, services and for food.<sup>27</sup>

His Portuguese compatriot, Liu Manuo, confessed to having crossed the Macanese border together with Zhang Ruose at the age of forty-one. In addition to the above-mentioned Chinese subjects, he gave testimony of missionary activities in the homes of the Nanhui 南匯 villagers Shen Taijie 沈泰界 and Zhang Yuying 張玉映. The other missionaries - Gong Anduoni, Li Ruose and Fei Diwoni 費迪奧尼[Dionisio Ferreira, 1720 - 1771], all in their early thirties - also utilised local contacts established with the help of the Macanese clergy. The locals, Fujianese Christians, supplied the European missionaries with oarsmen and canal boats, usually in exchange for a fee of “more than two hundred silverlings”. Fei Diwoni had at first been requested by the Macanese bishop to bolster the missionary presence in the capital - an indication of the continuing links between the two remaining missionary bases in China. Following the advice of a Chinese Christian, however, the Europeans changed their strategy, directing the young missionary to the Christian communities of the Jiangnan instead. In the case of Li Ruose we learn that though he followed the others into the interior, he was unable to proselytise due to the fact that “he did not speak Chinese”.<sup>28</sup> The missionaries rejected accusations that they had used drugs to reduce the vigilance of the common people, justifying the salt, bread, oil and wine found in their possession as sacrificial substances, which had either been brought over from the west or purchased locally. The claim that they had infiltrated the Chinese heartland with “ulterior motives” was countenanced by insisting that they were merely

---

<sup>27</sup> This testimony is filed at the FHA, scroll 9258, original document 492, sub-number 8, frame 303. “Portugal” is referred to either as *luoxidani*[ya] *guo* 魯西達尼[亞]國 or as *puerduoyani guo* 葡爾都亞尼國 - the scribe obviously being unaware of the synonymy of both place names. A reference to Wang Qinyi has already been made on p. 172.



the traditional hospitality awarded to foreign tributaries - without offering much more. A “diplomatic” row erupted over the correct ritual behaviour of the guest - as submissive tributary, not as equal within an international community of equals - when Macartney refused to kow-tow to his host.<sup>32</sup> The Qianlong rulership, on the other hand, would probably have forgiven the *faux pas* if the international situation had been less menacing. Along the northern borders of the Qing, the Muscovite empire was constantly expanding its military might. The Dutch had briefly occupied Taiwan, during the Ming-Qing transition, and had become a predominant force in the Asian South-East. Furthermore, and very crucially in the context of the Macartney mission, the Qing administration was becoming aware of the steadily consolidating influence of the British on the Indian subcontinent, where principality after principality was co-opted in a bid to reduce opposition to British rule.<sup>33</sup> Nervous about the worsening

---

<sup>32</sup> The “kow-tow” issue would subsequently be interpreted by Western historians as a clear sign of Chinese arrogance and unwillingness to share the diplomatic code which was being perfected in contemporary Europe. A typical representative of this interpretation is Earl H. Pritchard, “The Kowtow in the Macartney Embassy to China in 1793”, in: *Far Eastern Quarterly*, II-2 (1943), pp. 163-201. See his explanation on the origins of the kowtow tradition (*sangui jiukseshou* 叩頭禮之起源), in *ibidem*, pp. 165-167. A more nuanced interpretation is Zhang Shunhong’s contribution “Historical Anachronism: The Qing Court’s Perception and the Reaction to the Macartney Embassy”, in Bickers, *Ritual and Diplomacy*, p. 40 ff. Zhang does, however, not provide a radically new point of departure, and reproduces the stereotype of China’s arrogant indifference towards the rest of the world, “in sharp contrast to Britain’s knowledge of China” (*ibidem*, p. 40). A critical appraisal of Zhang’s article can be found in T. H. Barrett, “Ignorance and the Technology of Information”, p. 21. The traditional interpretation of the kowtow issue is criticised in James L. Hevia, “The Macartney Embassy in the History of Sino-Western Relations”, in: Bickers, *Ritual and Diplomacy*, pp. 57-79, and comprehensively in his monograph *Cherishing Men from Afar - Qing Guest Ritual and the Macartney Embassy of 1793*, Durham / New Carolina: Duke University Press 1995.

<sup>33</sup> I have been unable to locate concrete, primary proof of official fears concerning potential British colonisation. Several imperial decrees dating from the turn of the nineteenth century, however, reveal substantial knowledge of Britain, France and of the Indian subcontinent. This refers specifically to the decree condemning the British assault on Macau of 1808 quoted in Wang Zhichun, *Qingchao rouyuan ji*, pp. 153-158. Tseng-Tsai Wang (see *idem*, “The Macartney Mission: A Bicentenary Review”, in: Bickers, *Diplomacy and Ritual*, pp. 50 and 54) does however refer to Chinese knowledge of the East India Company’s involvement in the Gurkha conflict along the Tibetan-Nepalese border. This is based on Wang’s interpretation of an imperial edict preceding the letter of the Qianlong emperor to George III. The edict can be found in *Zhang-gu congbian* 皇朝經世文編 (“Collected historical documents”), Beijing: Imperial Palace Museum 1929, volume eight, p. 65. The edict indicates a suspicion, supported by other Western traders, that the English may have had ulterior motives, and furthermore recommends to be on the guard “due to previous incidents” involving the English (... 英人等前次來華時曾有不逞之徒乘機滋事以致英人等受其欺侮). The simultaneous

situation in the immediate vicinity of the Qing empire, the Qianlong administration decided to monitor the movement of foreign vessels by restricting direct commercial activity to the port of Guangzhou. The impatience of the independent traders in India and in Indochina with the “Canton system” would eventually lead to contraband traffic in opium and to the direct imposition of European force. At the time of Macartney’s visit to the throne, however, the likelihood of such action still seemed remote, and the wisest option, it seemed, was to keep a polite, yet safely distant relationship with foreign merchants and ambassadors.<sup>34</sup> The curiosity aroused by the diplomatic visit, however, provided an important impetus to English and Scottish clerics poised to take the torch of Christianity (and perceived “Protestant” values) to the corners of the world. Robert Morrison (1782-1834) and William Milne (1785-1822) would soon join the Catholic ambassadors of Christianity in Macau, and embark on the translation of the Bible - the cornerstone of Protestant religious life. As a font of knowledge of Chinese culture and language, Morrison was pivotal in his role as interpreter on the occasion of the next British embassy to Beijing - that of Lord Amherst in 1816.<sup>35</sup>

Against this background, the ban against foreign missionary activity, as defined by the Yongzheng edict of 1724, took on a more instrumental role during the latter part of the eighteenth century. It was gradually becoming part of a policy of

---

conflicts between Tibetans and Han in western Sichuan is likely to have increased suspicions towards foreign powers even further. See Léonide Guiot, *La Mission du Su-tchuen au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, p. 215 ff, for a description of the hostilities. Anecdotal evidence is also provided in Huc, *Souvenirs of a Journey*, volume II, pp. 266-267, in the context of maps discovered in the luggage of Huc and Gabet.

<sup>34</sup> This is at least the opinion of James Hevia, after interpreting the relevant edicts and memorials. See J. L. Hevia, *Cherishing Men from Afar*, pp. 26 and 220 ff.

<sup>35</sup> See John Kenneth Latourette, *A History of the Expansion*, VI, pp. 104-108. The two were aided by Joshua Marshman (1768-1837), author of a Bible translation published in Serampore, India. Morrison would, in July 1814 in Macau, also become the first European missionary to succeed in converting a Chinese to the Protestant expression of Christianity. See Latourette, *A History of Christian Missions*, pp. 211-215, and also Murray A. Rubinstein, *The Origins of the Anglo-American Missionary Enterprise in China, 1807-1840*, Lanham / Maryland and London: Scarecrow Press 1996, pp. 75-164. Interesting insight into the background of Morrison’s mission can be found in the contemporary publication by William Willis Moseley, *The Origins of the First Protestant Mission to China and History of the*

protection against foreign intrusion. Christians, during the early Jiaqing reign period, were now also regarded as “traitors”, who sacrificed their loyalty to the dynasty (*zhong* 忠) in order to egoistically further the cause of their religious affiliation.<sup>36</sup> By implication, this accusation indicates that Chinese Christianity by the turn of the century was regarded as an entirely endogenous phenomenon, and that links between Christian “heretics” and foreign elements were to be seen as having a merely aggravating effect on the situation. The contrast with the earlier period becomes clear when comparing this new role with the interpretation of the prosecuting officials in the above case against the Portuguese missionaries, one generation earlier: Although the involvement of foreigners was regarded as “illegal” (*bufa qingshi* 不法情事), it did not yet constitute an act of treason. This distinction is underlined by the wording of a memorial drafted in 1767, already twenty years prior to Macartney's visit, about local Christian support for “foreign Christians”.<sup>37</sup> The memorial clearly links the presence of the foreign missionaries to the welcoming attitude of the Chinese Christians. The Christians had “invited” the foreigners into Guangdong, in order to

---

*Events which Induced the Attempt and Succeeded in the Accomplishment of a Translation of the Holy Scriptures into the Chinese Language ...*, London: Simpkin and Marshall 1842.

<sup>36</sup> Amendments to the imperial law code (*Daqing lüli* 大清律例) at the very beginning of the nineteenth century had the effect of interpreting all new non-Confucian movements as “heretical”, thus authorising legal action against the followers and missionaries of such religious movements. Whether Christianity was included is unclear, since it was hardly “new” to China. The Propaganda report on the state of the China mission is filed as APF SOCP, *Indie Orientali*, 1817, ff. 12-13. The state's attempts to reinstate law and order are expressed in the Jiaqing emperor's edict of 21 August 1805, in the aftermath of the Adeodato case: “At the same time the people shall be informed by public proclamation that the laws forbidding the European heretical religion are extremely severe. .... The Viceroy and the Governor (in Canton) shall take adequate measures to effectively control [all foreigners], which may lead to the extermination of evil, root and stem; thus they shall keep the path straight, which, moreover, is the most important part of their task in correcting and ruling the manners and customs.” 竊維我朝設法禁絕異端，歷有年所，成效昭著。茲聞廣東省城，有外國人誘惑愚民，聚眾滋事，情殊可恨。著令該省督撫，嚴密查緝，務將首犯拿獲，以儆效尤。其該省城內，所有外國人，均須嚴加管束，不得稍有越軌。如有違犯，定行嚴懲不貸。欽此。The edict is also referred to in de Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution*, p. 398.

<sup>37</sup> Memorial by Wu Shaoshi 吳少時, FHA, scroll 9258, document number 492, sub-number 14, frames 318-320, dated QL 32/8/20 (3 September 1767). The memorial is entitled “Memorial also concerning the investigation of Christianity” (奏為查辦天主教情事摺), clearly citing collusion with foreigners as the main offence. The origin of the foreigners is unclear. In an accompanying report, dated QL 32/8/26 (18 September 1767) they are collectively referred to as “Europeans” (*ouluoba-guo ren* 歐洲各國人).



spread Christianity in the province (广东省基督教传教士). The ensuing investigation produced the habitual evidence: “Pamphlets”, “rosaries”, “pictures and statues”. One commoner Liu had a crucifix hanging on the walls of his home, and the existence of a “hall for performing rites and worship and for reading the scriptures” (*dianli-baiye-jingyue tang* 点礼百业经月堂) was disclosed - years after such places of worship had been ordered to be burnt to the ground by the provincial governor Li Yuanping (李元平). Increasingly on the defensive against perceived menaces to the Pax Manchurica, the Qing now became openly hostile to visits by foreign individuals. A memorial sent to the Grand State Council in the year 1777 illustrates the heightening tension characterising the relationship between the Qing state and foreign nationals.<sup>38</sup> Enumerating their names, the memorial decries the increasing infiltration of foreign nationals (“alien eyes”, *yimu* 异目) into the market towns and villages of Guangdong province - Xiangshan 香山 district in particular. With the clear intention of sounding alarm bells in Beijing, the former governor described the typical route for gaining access to the Chinese interior: A foreign vessel would bring the Europeans (in this case from a country referred to as *fujijiya-guo* 佛吉亚国) to Macau, whence foreign traders would accompany them into the market places of Guangdong. Missionaries would then advance further with the help of Qing subjects - an offence described by the official as “intercourse and connivance with Chinese traitors” (*yu hanjian wanglai, ganjie* 与奸商往来勾结). These contacts, we learn, were sometimes directly organised by Christians in the capital - a discovery which put the

<sup>38</sup> The memorial (zi 子) was sent by the former governor-general of the Guangdong-Guangxi double-province, Li Xinbo 李新波. The memorial is dated QL 41/12/18, i.e. 26 January 1777, and can be found in the FHA as scroll 9258, document 492, sub-number 21, frames 345-353.

Chinese Christians in Beijing increasingly at risk.<sup>39</sup> The case was later retrieved from the administrative files, when in 1782 (QL 47) the same Wang Dahong returned with another European, Duoluomajinuo 都魯瑪金諾, in order to rebuild contacts with the Chinese church. The governor-general of the double-province, Tangjueluoba 唐爵魯巴, responded by arresting a whole string of Chinese traders, known to have been in frequent contact with Western merchants, in order to extract information.<sup>40</sup> In December 1784, the provincial government of Guangdong reported the detention of two young Westerners, who had disembarked with the intention of reaching the imperial capital Beijing. The young men were named as Tang Shixuan 唐世璇, 32 years of age, followed by a Liu Siyong 劉世雍, almost ten years Tang's junior. The main reason given for their journey to Beijing was rumours of the diminishing presence of foreign missionaries in the Chinese capital.<sup>41</sup> Raids on Christian communities, with or without public churches, in the vicinity of the Beijing municipality, intensified during the last two decades of the eighteenth century. As a reaction to news of illegally arriving European missionaries, the state showed nervous sensitivity to any report of public, non-concealed displays of Christianity. A couple of

---

<sup>39</sup> Thus we learn of a Wang Dahong 王達宏, Deng Leisi 鄧雷思 and Xi Daoming 奚大明. Furthermore of a Ai Qimeng 艾奇蒙, Gao Shensi 高申士, An Guoning 安國寧, a *Ximoliedì* 奚摩利地, *Mofeihua* 摩非花, and a *Weiliduo* 威利都. Their Chinese counterpart was a certain Chen Guangshun 陳光順, referred to as “the traitor”. The term *hanjian* 漢奸, should however not be read with the eyes of a 20th century historian. Instead of “being a traitor to the Han people”, the term here suggests a rather scornful reference to a “nefarious element from among the Han”, *jian* 奸 here implying dishonesty and lack of loyalty.

<sup>40</sup> See the memorial by Tangjueluoba to the Grand State Council, FHA, scroll 9258, original document 492, sub-number 24, frames 359-364, dated QL 47/2/26 (8/4/1782).

<sup>41</sup> “It had become known that the number of Western people in the capital has been in the process of diminishing. ... One Westerner has been named as Tang Shixuan, 32 years of age, with knowledge of astronomy, and his disciple Liu Siyong, 23, is apt at astronomy and painting.” 聞得西人漸少。... 聞得西人一名唐世璇，年三十二，通天文，其弟子劉世雍，年二十三，亦通天文及繪畫。 See the memorial by the circuit official for Guangdong, Sun Shiyi 孫世宜, composed in QL 49/10/22, i.e. 4 December 1784. The memorial is preserved as FHA, scroll 9258, original document 492, sub-number 23, frames 357-358. “Tang Shixian” is nobody else than Alexandre de Gouvea, whereas the identity of the other person could not be identified.

memorials issued in 1785 on the discovery of churches (tianzhutang 天主堂) in the Zhili districts of Daxing 大兴 and Wanping 宛平 underline this observation.<sup>42</sup> Having identified the two commoners Liu Duomo 劉多模 and Liu Leisi 劉lesi as the ringleaders, the officials proclaimed the arrest of the culprits and the destruction of cultic objects discovered during the operation. As if to confirm the suspicions harboured against migrating labourers, the two sectarian leaders were natives of Zhuozhou 涿州, Zhili, who had entered the area as hired hands. The consequences of the gradual increase in Western involvement after the turn of the century would be even more severe.

In part, the increasingly defensive attitude of the Qing state can be explained through the gradual reimmersion of foreigners into the empire. In the language of imperial documents, the term “Doctrine of the Lord of Heaven” 天主教, which had been used for the Christian religion since the introduction of the term by the first Jesuit priests, was being replaced by “Western Religion” 西教. Though chiefly used to express disapproval relating to the non-indigenous characteristics of Christianity, the designation as an “alien” element was also in reaction to the increasing proselytisation effort by foreigners after 1800. The attempt by the two Lazarists priests Richenet and Dumazel to travel in June 1805 from their interim base in Shandong province to the imperial capital can be taken as evidence of this new missionary effort. The two Frenchmen had agreed to risk detention because of the increasing difficulties for the Christian mission in the old congregations of Beijing. At the same time, they took heart from the strengthening of commercial ties between China and Europe, and from reports of resurgent Christian communities in the interior of the Qing empire. These new missionaries either disregarded the threat of punishment, or were simply

---

<sup>42</sup> Both districts are located in Shuntian-fu 順天府, Zhili province. The memorials are dated QL 49/11/24 (4 January 1785) and 49/11/28 (8 January 1785), respectively. See FHA, scroll 9258, original

unaware of the legal situation in the Qing empire. Richenet and Dumazel were eventually arrested at the provincial border between Shandong and Zhili, with the laconic remark that “there were already enough mathematicians in Beijing”.<sup>43</sup> Another case in point was the Franciscan Giovanni Lantrua, whose disregard for the perils of the latter Jiaqing period led to his capture in the winter of 1812 whilst engaged in missionary work in the Jiangnan area. The memorial referring to his arrest stressed the importance Qing officials now attached to preventing foreigners from mingling with Chinese subjects:

Recently, the provincial governor Weng Yuanqi obtained information on the arrest of the Westerner Lan Yuewang in Leiyang District, Hunan for reasons of creating converts and propagating his beliefs. An imperial decree received [states]: ‘A certain Lan Yuewang channelled foreigners from the West into the interior, travelling over long distances through several provinces, creating converts and spreading his religion, deceiving many of them. This represents the peak of lawlessness. Weng Yuanqi shall interrogate this person with severity and, following the investigation, he shall condemn the culprit to be strangled. Following the proceedings and their execution, he shall report to the Throne. Offenders mentioned in the confession shall be individually investigated and arrested. Moreover, despatches shall be sent out as fast as possible to all affected provinces, for the rigorous arrest, examination and prosecution of such people elsewhere. The district magistrate of Leiyang district, Chang Qing, shall be thorough in his investigations and arrests. Once completed, all lawsuits shall be sent to the Board [of Punishment] for inspection, for repeated imperial approval.’<sup>44</sup>

---

document 493, sub-numbers 35 and 36, frames 393-396. The reporting officials are Cao Wenzhi 曹文志, Wu Mingqiu 吴明秋 and Liu E 刘鄂.


<sup>43</sup> ... *parce qu'on a reconnu qu'il y avait déjà trop de mathématiciens à Pékin*. Cf. the above-mentioned letter by Denis Chaumont to Boiret, sent from London on 26 October 1806, and kept at the APF as document SC, series III, *Cina et Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, folium 167 R.

<sup>44</sup> The memorial is recorded in Wang Zhichun, *Qingchao rouyuanji*, p. 167 清高宗純皇帝實錄卷一百六十七, 乾隆二十六年十一月, 頁一百六十七.

The officials accepted the suggested punishment and had Lantrua executed through strangulation in Changsha, Hunan in January 1816.<sup>45</sup> The increasing xenophobia of Chinese officials produced, at times, unintended consequences. A memorial of the year 1812 stated in all clarity that an Indian traveller from Calcutta, who had been captured together with a Chinese interpreter in Tibet “both in his face and in his general appearance resembled a European, ... a Christian using the worship of Buddha as a pretext for spreading his religion in secret”.<sup>46</sup> Officials, who in their ignorance confounded Chinese Christianity with other popular religious movements were now prone to amalgamate all arrivals from beyond the Qing borders in one broad category of foreign missionary activity. The tone was set for the conflicts of the Opium War period.

What lessons can we draw from the documentation presented in the third part?

The testimony clearly outlines three developments which shaped the development of the relationship between state and Christian communities during the eighteenth century: It firstly links the punitive action by the state prosecutors with the Yongzheng



Author's own translation, with de Groot's translation of a similar memorial used for comparison (see next footnote).

<sup>45</sup> De Groot, however, identifies “Lan Yuewang” as the French Franciscan Jean de Triora, garrotted shortly after Lantrua on 19 February 1816. See de Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution*, p. 480, which contains a cross-reference to the *Annales de la Foi* (1829), p. 132. De Groot’s text also differs slightly from the version of the decree preserved in Zhao Chunchen’s edition. It is dated JQ 21/1/23 (19 February 1816), whereas Zhao Chunchen cites the “tenth winter month” (□□□□□□) of the preceding year (i.e. December 1815).

46

□□□  
□□□ For the memorial by Yang Chun □□□□ on the arrest  
of the Calcuttan “Malin”□□□□, see De Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution*, p. 401  
(original text preserved in the *Shengxun*, volume 100).

edict against missionary activity. The foreigners thus did not stand accused of infiltrating the Qing empire as representatives of alien, hostile forces. The wording of the legal material, on the contrary, indicates that the foreigners were to be treated on an equal footing with the Chinese defendants. The material secondly illustrates that the (indigenous) China mission of the mid-eighteenth century was surviving on the basis of the personal network established between Christian families and villages throughout southern China - in particular between the old Christian heartland around Nanjing and the provinces of Fujian and Guangdong. Most importantly, the Qing feared a loss of control over the countryside, both ideologically against “heresy” and “superstition”, and in terms of military control. The threat of rural insurrection seemed compounded by the state's inability to guarantee the ideological purity of its own armed forces: How could Bannermen who had themselves fallen prey to “heresy” be trusted to wage war against sectarian uprising? Foreigners were a further destabilising aspect of this phenomenon, but due to their minute presence in the empire (even including the capital area and Macau) the real threat emanated from a religious environment below district level, where loyalties were primarily with religious leaders and their ancestors, and not with the ruling dynasty. In the hierarchy of official concern, the Western *waidiren* were not more or less unsettling than those from neighbouring Chinese provinces. Converts were nevertheless held responsible for following a prohibited sect “without signs of remorse”, but also of “inducing aliens to secretly enter the hinterland”.<sup>47</sup> As a matter of agency, it was clearly the local Christian population who planned and enacted activities regarded as “destabilising” by the imperial administration. Against this background, Western missionaries were

---

<sup>47</sup> 誘惑外夷潛入內地 - a standard accusations which can be found in almost any official document commenting on foreign involvement during the late eighteenth century.

passive participants rather than actors, following their vocation wherever the local Christian network permitted it. Few in number, easily detected and only rarely sojourning longer than for brief visits, European missionaries were very nearly a non-existent at the end of the eighteenth century. Rather than constituting a genuine threat, it was their perception as an aggravating factor in a countryside already plagued by “heresy” which caused the authorities to act.

## **Part IV - Conclusion: Christianity as popular Chinese religion**

### **Chapter 11: Who is the “Chinese Christian”?**

#### **1. *Class, gender, literacy***

This study began with an attempt to define the quality of religious life during the late imperial period. Key elements included attitudes towards moral rectitude and punishment for transgressing socio-religious norms, elements of metaphysical belief and materialism, as well as the rituals marking the cardinal stages of life. One of the principal conclusions of this thesis is that the message conveyed by the missionaries from Europe was instantaneously “translated” - i.e. integrated into a pre-existing linguistic and intellectual matrix - by the new converts.<sup>1</sup> This “translation” occurred even when the linguistic quality of the translated message was in itself impeccable. A factor potentially more divisive than language was present in the respective cultural backgrounds of priest and convert, internalised through oral tradition and, at least for the more privileged, absorbed through formal education. Such educational factors helped overcome the cultural differences between civilisations: Jesuit scholar-priests in general conferred with Chinese scholar-officials more confidently than they would have done with peasants from Christian Europe. To the prospective scholar-official convert, the most important criterion was the perceived compatibility between Neo-Confucian rites and the concepts propagated by the missionaries.<sup>2</sup> At the same time,

---

<sup>1</sup> The problem of “translation” can also arise within a specific language community, if concepts are transferred from one set of religious beliefs into a separate conceptual framework. In the case of late imperial China, Daoism had absorbed many Buddhist concepts - despite Buddhism’s “foreign roots”. The issue of “linguistic hybridisation” is referred to in the article by Chinfa Lien “Language Adaptation and Taoist Liturgical Texts”, in: D. Johnson (ed.), *Ritual and Scripture*, pp. 219-246. The Japanese case is analysed in Stefan Kaiser, “Translations of Christian Terminology into Japanese, 16-19th Centuries: Problems and Solutions”, in: Breen and Williams (eds), *Japan and Christianity* 1996, pp. 8-29 (in particular pp. 24-26, on the role of Chinese translations imported into Japan).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Lionel M. Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism*, chapter 1.



mendicant orders from southern Europe had considerable appeal among the uneducated peasants and fishing communities of the Chinese coastal provinces.<sup>3</sup>

After the very moment of transmission, the Christian message itself had to be further clarified by the priest and its implementation monitored carefully. In this context, one of the most important impediments to the conversion - and retention - of wealthier members of Chinese society was the missionaries' emphasis on monogamy. The issue arose early in the proselytisation of Christianity in China, and is well documented in Ming elite discourse.<sup>4</sup> Used to parentally assigned nuptial partners, the idea of a marital sacrament thus held little appeal even among the more orthodox members of the Church. Polygamy and institutionalised prostitution thus continued to exist throughout the first phase of the China mission. The refusal to baptise men who were loth to abandon the habit of concubinage often turned these into sworn enemies of the new faith, having been denied the prospect of eternal life for what must have been regarded as an ancestral right.<sup>5</sup> Female Christians developed different reactions, from consenting submission to parental will, and from the consciously monogamous betrothal to a fellow Christian to the outright refusal to marry (and the Christian sororities).<sup>6</sup> In eighteenth century China, extensive family networks provided the basis for a "natural" proliferation of Christianity. The sources used for this thesis clearly indicate that even the more remote descendants of converts referred to themselves as "Christians", even when tortured. While Chinese peasants and scholar-officials alike would have welcomed the notion of a self-perpetuating network of family-based

---

<sup>3</sup> See Giacomo di Fiore, *Lettere di Missionari dalla Cina*, pp. 94-95.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Jacques Gernet, "Gli ambienti intellettuali cinesi all'epoca del Ricci", in: *Atti del convegno internazionale di studi Ricciani*, Macerata 1984, pp. 101-120.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Robert Entenmann, "The Establishment of Chinese Catholic Communities", p. 148 ff.

<sup>6</sup> The life of Candida Xu 徐 聖 貞 (1607-1680) member of the Xu 徐 clan in the Jiangnan and granddaughter of Xu Guangqi, has been held up as an example of a "successfully reformed" marriage

Christianity, the European missionaries, at least in public, emphasised the spiritual *qualitas* of the individual.<sup>7</sup>

Textual debate provided the *raison d'être* for the literati class. To the peasantry, taking account of all its diversity, the written word mattered to a lesser degree than within educated circles.<sup>8</sup> Religious pamphlets were popular due to symbolic value rather than to mere doctrinal content. The salvational aspect of religious texts lay less in detailed exegesis than in the firm belief in, as well as the constant recitation, of their contents.<sup>9</sup> During the seventeenth century in particular, the emphasis of *baojuan* writing would shift towards ritual aspects of popular Buddhism and practical concerns of believers.<sup>10</sup> In parallel fashion, Christian believers petitioned their own saints and meditated by using the outward symbols of their faith, in keeping with pre-existing traditions of worship, rather than invoking a conscious doctrinal discourse. To the women who prayed to the Virgin Mother of *Yesu Jidu* for children, a plentiful harvest and lenient husbands, the pragmatic purpose of the prayer overrode the precise definition of the addressed deity. Rather than deliberating the philosophical junctures of Christianity and philosophical traditions, the general population was more immediately concerned with aspects that seemed to compromise their inveterate beliefs relating to work, ancestry and filiality.

---

pattern among the members of the converted elite. For more details, see Gail King “Candida Xu”, pp. 49-66.

<sup>7</sup> This has remained the official position of the Catholic church. See Fiona Bowie, “The Inculturation Debate in Africa”, pp. 85-86.

<sup>8</sup> Village schools, where extant, relied on Confucian primers, such as the Three Character Classic (*Sanzijing* 三才經) in order to disseminate literacy. Rote-learning and repeated recitation by literate elders ensured that Confucian maxims were known at least to a certain extent. Western missionaries would later emulate this method for the propagation of Christian values. See, for the nineteenth century, Evelyn Rawski, “Elementary Education in the Mission Enterprise”, in: Barnett and Fairbank, *Christianity in China*, pp. 142-152.

<sup>9</sup> See D. Overmyer, *Precious Volumes*, pp. 22-23.

## **2. *Ancestors and filial sons - The dilemma of socio-religious identity***

The Confucian notion of “filiality” (*xiao* 孝), i.e. ritualised respect for one’s ancestry, provided a paramount incentive for the perpetuation of the Chinese family cult. Rather than expressing the religious beliefs of individual adherents, the existence of religious traditions passed down from parent to child has to be seen as an act of social self-definition. A family in its third generation of professed Christianity had created strong cultic parameters for defining its collective identity, both within the greater family and within society at large. In daily practice, however, most of its social and cultural features, however, would have been shared by the rest of village society. The precise degree of overlap was determined by local conditions: Whereas some families preferred to form tight-knit communities visibly segregated from their non-Christian neighbours, others remained integrated into the larger social entity. These tendencies were not unique to Christianity, but represented patterns of social integration or segregation experienced by other religious movements during the late imperial period.<sup>11</sup>

The evidence examined in the first part of this thesis suggests that a genuine paradox existed: On the one hand, we find reports of Christians who lived actively within their non-Christian society and who expressed dismay at the idea that they were part of a “heretical” movement. In a letter by Emmanuele Conforti, for instance, written in 1801 during his Apostolic Visitation of Shanxi, we hear of Christian families urging the visitor to formally sanction their participation in a certain local custom which had been condemned by earlier priests as constituting usury. Conforti was so impressed by the importance the Christians attached to being integrated into

---

<sup>10</sup> Such as inner alchemy, divine assistance through prayer and the nature of purgatory (*diyu* 地獄, or “hell”). *Ibidem*, pp. 230-247.

the local traditions that he requested an investigation by the Propaganda officials in Rome.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, several documents used provide evidence of inter-communal conflict, where Christian families - in particular in small kinship-defined village structures - created their own sphere in order to set themselves apart from the non-Christian “other”. The missionary correspondence from the period covered by this thesis reveals an even split between both types of rural Christians, ranging from despairing reports of engrained “uncontrollable habits” pre-dating Christianity to letters underlining the “purity” of the believers’ faith and their full compliance with Christian ethics.

### **3. *The Christian paradox***

On the second day of month five of the tenth year in the Jiaqing era (30 May 1805), the adolescent Huan Yang innocently revealed his knowledge of Christianity to the yamen officials investigating the whereabouts of fugitive Christian “criminals”. Most of the boy’s statements matched the vagueness encountered in the testimonies used for this thesis. The one fragment which stood out from his other recollections of the Christian faith was the Christians’ belief in a “judgement after death through [God’s] right hand, the sun being to his left” (□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□).<sup>13</sup> Akin to the two generations of Chinese Christians before Huan Yang, the theological causation for “Christian” ritual and identity had faded away. Anecdotal interpretations

---

<sup>11</sup> See Susan Naquin, “Connections between Rebellions”, pp. 337-340.

<sup>12</sup> Conforti refers to the custom as the *contratto Yao hoef*, popular in the Lugan-fu area, “a certain way of betting money in the hope of winning a cash prize”. The term probably relates to the characters □□□□, i.e. an “invitation to join in”. Would Christians want to be regarded as spoilsports, by refusing to “join in”? Cf. APF SC, *Indie Orientali/Cina*, 1806-1811, folia 24-25. See B. Willeke, “The Report of the Apostolic Visitation”, p. 262. The “Report” contains a highly graphic account of the practice, which could involve great sums of money.

of Christian concepts had replaced the original missionary message. Paraphernalia such as the crucifix, rosary and scrolls of sacred writings had been transformed from mere symbols of the Christian cult to its object. The memorisation of mysterious texts and preservation of tangible symbols bequeathed by the Christian founding fathers constituted, by the outset of the nineteenth century, the very essence of popular Christianity. This phenomenon was in fact a reflection of a wider process within the popular religious landscape of late imperial China. By the middle of the eighteenth century, Confucianism had long since undergone a process of syncretisation, accepting and redefining traditions emanating from the literati elite to the rural masses. Despite their profound insight into Chinese civilisation, the missionaries from Europe proved unable to overcome their own cultural inhibitions, mainly imposed by monotheism and denominational exclusivism, causing the subtleties of mid-Qing Confucianism to be crushed under the dichotomy of (idealised) Confucianism and (“diabolical”) Buddhism. Some Confucians were certainly flattered by this unabashed defence of the Confucian system.<sup>14</sup> Others were impressed by the philosophical and scientific erudition of their Western colleagues. But on the whole, the missionaries were unaware of the fact that in popular religious life Confucian, Daoist and Buddhist traditions had become part of a tricameral religious edifice.

The European missionaries who entered China after the international situation had turned against the Qing administration, did not approve of - and frequently not recognise - China's inculturated Christians. A letter of 1806, sent by the bishop of

---

<sup>13</sup> See FHA, scroll 9258, original document 493, sub-number 38. For more insight into the actions of the investigating official, De Lengtai 德楞泰, against the White Lotus around the year 1800, see de Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution*, p. 361.

<sup>14</sup> It is also known that the literatus Yuan Mei 袁枚 was acquainted with at least some of the ideas of the Jesuit court missionaries. This was due in particular to the Manchurian aristocrat and official Depei, probably converted around 1718 by Ignatius Kögler. For possible evidence revealing the poet's familiarity with some of the principles of Christianity, see Waley, *Yuan Mei*, pp. 31-32.

Macau illustrates this observation: Two young European missionaries are praised for attempting to reinvigorate the China mission. Enthusiastic in their vocation, the missionaries showed little tolerance towards deviations from Catholic orthodoxy. Whenever the two ardent Christians encountered such “old Christians” in the province of Guangdong, the missionary flock would be “piously instructed, their hearts opened up, their awareness enlightened in order to experience the truth, to abandon erroneous thinking and to worship God and the commandments above all and with all one’s energy....”.<sup>15</sup>

Short of surrendering their individual orthodoxies, all component members participated in the mutual exchange of saints, symbols and ritual language. Also Confucianism, though principally immune to transcendental predilections, absorbed certain religious elements. More importantly, the Confucian crusade, which had begun during the early Song period, had left an indelible imprint on the popular religions of the eighteenth century. Accustomed to the borrowing of elements originally pertaining to other religious and philosophical traditions, the population of the Qing empire embraced Christianity with the same curiosity which would have been extended towards any of the other cults circulating through the Chinese countryside. The documents consulted for this thesis demonstrate that Christianity, introduced by missionaries in its Tridentine orthodoxy and in literary Chinese language, did not escape the tendency towards popularisation - much to the chagrin of the European

---

<sup>15</sup> The quote is excerpted from a letter by Goldino and refers to the missionaries Michele Siè and Raffaele Ijon. Cf. APF source SOCP, *Indie Orientali*, 1817, folium 37 R. The text in the original: ... *per propagare la vera Religione di Dio nella provincia di Cantone, insegnare pietosamente ai popoli, aprir loro i cuori, illuminare il loro intendimento perchè sappiano conoscere la verità, abandonar l'errore, adorare l'Iddio sopra tutte le cose, e perchè tutti osservino i Commandamenti del Signore, e lo servano con tutte le forze, e adempiano agli obblighi e preatti della legge in considerazione alfine eterno.*

missionaries.<sup>16</sup> Facilitated by perceived similarities between Christian concepts and elements of Chinese religious tradition, the descendants of first-generation converts adapted the fragments of the original missionary message to the spiritual and cultic cosmos of their village environment. Former adherents of popular Buddhist and Daoist movements, however, usually resisted attempts to eradicate past paganisms. Frequently having been baptised as part of mass evangelisations, such converts amalgamated new Christian concepts with the concepts of their former beliefs, to an extent that even “the foreign priests could not agree whether the converts ... were sincere believers or 'false' Christians”.<sup>17</sup> Rural Christianity had thus shed most of its spiritual content in order to become a “hereditary” denominator of ancestral - hence social - identity. More than one hundred years after the Yongzheng edict of 1724, Chinese syncretism had thus engendered a uniquely Chinese expression of Christianity, perpetuated by commoners such as little Huan Yang.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> An early example of inculturation is reported in a letter from the year 1734, mentioning a “false sect” in Shandong and Henan. See the letter to P. Souciet, St Petersburg (23-7-1734), in: Renée Simon (ed.), *Le P. Antoine Gaubil*, p. 382.

<sup>17</sup> R. G. Tiedemann, “Christianity and Chinese ‘Heterodox Sects’”, p. 370. This observation coincides with the pattern of Christianity’s expansion into the diverse popular traditions of European and Middle Eastern antiquity - Christianity’s first inculturation.

<sup>18</sup> Ever in flux, Christianity is never “final”, but dependant on the constant reinterpretation by contemporary society. See X. Wang, *Christianity and Imperial Culture*, pp. 226-230.

## Chapter 12: Epilogue - Chinese Christianity into the Third Millennium

### 1. *Heterodoxy in a new age*

The millenarian tendencies of the eighteenth century continued throughout the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth. Surrogate brotherhoods and ancient rituals, such as the sharing of blood from ritually slaughtered animals, cemented emotional ties of fellow destiny. Sectarian leaders encouraged the creation of personality cults, leading to an illusion of common ancestry among the rootless, yet devoted disciples. Almost impossible to police, their development was observed with great anxiety by the Qing authorities.<sup>1</sup> The local, non-migratory populations were not unaffected by such intensification of migrant religiosity: During the latter part of the eighteenth century, local cults honouring local deities experienced a mass following rivalling that of Buddhist millenarianism. In particular along the coast line, from Guangdong over Fujian into the Jiangnan, cults for gods of the seas and waterways spread along with their professional clientele: Fishermen, boatpullers and freight shippers.<sup>2</sup> Such cults were increasingly used as markers of distinct ethno-regional identity, in particular in regions where large-scale immigration had upset the established balance. Typically, this occurred where immigrant communities such as the Hakka and Chaozhou dialect speakers competed for land and commerce with the indigenous population (*pun-ti* or *bendi* 本地人). Reestablished by new generations of missionaries, Christianity was often particularly successful with marginalised

---

<sup>1</sup> See Robert J. Anthony, "Brotherhoods and the Law in Qing Dynasty China", in: David Ownby and Mary Somers Heidhues, *Secret Societies Reconsidered - Perspectives on the Social History of Modern South China and South East Asia*, Armonk / London: M. E. Sharpe 1993, pp. 190-211 for the legal counter-measures created by the state in order to defuse the problem.

<sup>2</sup> See James L. Watson, "Standardizing the Gods: The Promotion of T'ien Hou ('Empress of Heaven') along the South China Coast, 960-1960", in: D. Johnson, E. Rawski, A. Nathan (eds), *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China*, pp. 292-324, as well as Paul R. Katz, *Demon Hordes and Burning Boats: The Cult of Marshal Wen in Late Imperial Chekiang*, New York: SUNY Press 1995.



communities eager to establish links of common identity, and with strong outsiders. Christianity, by being increasingly drawn into local disputes, thus developed a markedly localised identity during the nineteenth century.<sup>3</sup>

Whereas such localised expressions of Christianity during the nineteenth century continued to develop under the observant eyes of Western missionaries, a truly syncretic popular movement developed with the Taiping state. Synthesising Confucian and Christian concepts, its emperor and spiritual leader Hong Xiuquan created an extended family network for his elder brother Jesus. Since Jesus was unwed, Hong Xiuquan regarded it as his filial duty to provide the Celestial Father with a male heir. The propagation of such traditional social morality were greeted by the populace with enthusiasm.<sup>4</sup>

To the European missionaries who arrived in the aftermath of the Opium War the variety of heterodox religious movements was confusing. It thus comes as no surprise to read reports of missionary disbelief when faced with surviving communities of “old Christians”. Constituting little more than “sectarians” who had been exposed to Christian teachings, the group would still be targeted more than one generation later by Western missionaries.<sup>5</sup> The time had come for them to join “China’s return to the Lord” (*zhonghua gui zhu* 中國歸主). Many of the converts produced in the wake of the Opium War had also been “head-hunted” from

---

<sup>3</sup> The recently completed PhD thesis by Dr Joseph Tse-Hei Lee (SOAS) has revealed the extent to which the dynamics of Christian inculturation - as well as of political loyalties - in southern Guangdong coincided and strengthened local identities in the 19th and 20 centuries. See Joseph Tse-Hei Lee, “Conversion or Protection? Collective Violence and Christian Movements in Late Nineteenth Century Chaozhou”, PhD thesis: University of London 2000.

<sup>4</sup> This is at least the opinion of the Taiping historian Wang Qingcheng 王慶成; see his *Tianfu tianxiong shengzhi*, p. 18. For further insight, see Hou Jie and Fan Lizhu, *Zhongguo minzhong zongjiao yishi*, pp. 297-298.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. R. G. Tiedemann, “Christianity and Chinese ‘Heterodox Sects’”, p. 379.

other religious movements, a fact that would occasionally lead to an open contest for religious believers.<sup>6</sup>

Research into the religious patterns of social formations in the past lacks the option of direct observation, so common in anthropological and sociological research. The pervasive illiteracy among the general populace moreover forces the historical eye to focus on official documents, such as conversations noted down during interrogations with officials. During this process, the original information is invariably transformed into the thoughts and feelings of the reporting individual by means of a standardising matrix of accepted interpretation. It follows that regardless of the intention or awareness of the rapporteur, be this the local yamen official or a visiting European missionary, the original information is distorted, thus becoming the subject matter of careful interpretation for the historian. Despite the shortcomings of having to rely on official documents and missionary correspondence, the sources used for this thesis revealed interesting parallels between popular notions of Christianity in pre-industrial Europe and certain religious and ritual traditions of rural China. Links between these two remote civilisations become obvious when the statements obtained from members of the peasantry are compared with our knowledge of mediaeval Western folklore and superstition.<sup>7</sup> It is rather likely that the eighteenth century visitors from Europe were all too aware of the “menace” emanating from popular religious thought - an enemy which had imperilled centuries of missionary work in

---

<sup>6</sup> See Daniel H. Bays, “Christianity and the Chinese Sectarian Tradition”, pp. 45 and 49 (referring to the Caihui 義和團 riots in Gutian, Fujian province of 1895; his comments are based on Mary Backus Rankin, “The Ku-t’ien Incident (1895): Christians versus the Ts’ai-hui”, in: *Papers on China*, 15 (1960), pp. 30-61.)

<sup>7</sup> My own observations largely confirm the general survey into popular Chinese religion by Hans Küng and Julia Jing. See Hans Küng and Julia Ching, *Christianity and Chinese Religions*, pp. 4-6, 154-155 and 215-216. See also Carlo Ginzburg, *Ecstasies*, pp. 89-121 (also the map on pp. 98-99) for “superstitious” interfaces of Christianity and pre-Christian beliefs in the European peasant tradition. A

occidental Christendom. Letters sent to the Vatican were hence unlikely to emphasise the degree to which Chinese Christianity had become “inculturated”, lest the China and India mission - begotten out of the Catholic counter-reformation - face obliteration. In a similar vein, reports by the agents of the Qing empire could hardly be anything but scathing in their treatment of popular religious movements. This owed as much to the probable effects of deviation from the Confucian orthodoxy as to the automatic reproduction of official prejudice against intellectual threats to the supremacy of the state and of its ideological integrity. The actual numbers of followers of illegal movements was of little direct relevance; the fact that the movements rallied and created members in opposition to decrees and statutes was sufficiently “subversive” to be regarded as an act of treason.

At the very end of this survey, we arrive at a fundamental question: Why does a phenomenon which only embraced a fraction of the overall population deserve the attention of the academic public more than two centuries later? The total figure of “Christians” during the century of prohibition probably never exceeded the three hundred thousand mark, i.e. at best constituting one tenth of a percent of the total population.<sup>8</sup> Yet, Qing officials expressed an unambiguous fear of an uncontrollable mass movement which could arise out of the Christian phenomenon. In order to obtain a representative picture of comparable movements in recent Chinese history, a brief

---

similar link between the rural traditions of Japan and of the Iberian peninsula is made in S. Turnbull, *Devotion to Mary*, p. 16.

<sup>8</sup> Missionary reports towards the end of the eighteenth century produce an even lower count. My own estimate assumes that persons who referred to themselves as Christians, with or without the knowledge / approval of a foreign missionary, outnumbered “official” Christians by a factor of two, hence doubling the more conservative estimates. See also E. Malatesta, “China and the Society of Jesus”, p. 6 ff, as well as figures compiled by Robert Entenmann, based on Charles Legobien, *Lettres Édifiantes des missions de la Chine et des Indes Orientales, 1717-1776*, Paris 1818-23 (presented at the International Convention of Asia Scholars, Noordwijkerhout 1998)

comparison with the popular religious environment at the close of twentieth century seems helpful.

## ***2. Maoism, the Three Self and another period of clandestine existence***

In the immediate aftermath of the proclamation of the People's Republic of China in October 1949, the victorious Communist Party under its chairman Mao Zedong 毛泽东 implemented a policy of "enforced indigenisation". The "Three Self" policy sought to eliminate the remnants of foreign domination on twentieth century Christianity, the allegation of which had thus tainted the relationship between the revolutionary government and the Christian churches.<sup>9</sup> In order to remain operational, congregations had to pledge allegiance to the new state, while promising to sever ties with the former missionary pastors. The officially propagated intention of the policy was to increase the - political and financial - independence of the Chinese churches, and hence to emphasise the "religious" nature of Christian congregations, although one obvious side-aspect was to increase the measure of state control over religious movements in "New China".<sup>10</sup> Albeit less oppressive than in Stalin's USSR, the new religious régime entailed a host of restrictions and recriminations against Christians, as well as followers of other religious movements. In many cases, the only alternative to harassment by state officials or life in exile was to congregate secretly, usually in the homes of fellow believers. During the years of chaos caused by the Cultural Revolution, the repressive policy was taken one step further. In order to "root out the old", Christian churches and Buddhist temples were desecrated and used for

---

<sup>9</sup> See Jean-Paul Wiest, "Learning from the Missionary Past", in: *idem* and Tang (eds), *The History of the Catholic Church*, p. 189.

<sup>10</sup> See C. K. Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society*, pp. 386-401.

educational or simply storage purposes.<sup>11</sup> In order to fill the void created by the outright denial of religious tradition, the ruling party attempted to blot out the desire for the “superstitious” by enlightening the masses through the propagation of science and political education. The activism of the Chinese Communist Party was based on the ideas of its ageing chairman Mao Zedong.<sup>12</sup> During the Cultural Revolution, the image of the infallible leader was projected onto his person, mainly in order to silence the critics of the “revolutionary” disorder. What followed proved to become one of the most dramatic manifestations of popular religious creativity: Propelled by the state media and the party apparatus, respect for the Great Helmsman had turned into a cult of his person.<sup>13</sup> His image ever-present, Mao Zedong became the object of daily veneration - at work, in public spaces, and frequently also at home.<sup>14</sup> His death in 1976 came as a tremendous shock to a public whose imagination had rendered Mao

---

<sup>11</sup> The period of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution 大跃进文化大革命 is commonly defined as the “ten bad years” between 1966-1976. In reality, the Cultural Revolution consisted of a relatively brief period of (near) anarchy and was further characterised by years of stagnation and power struggles within the CCP. A detailed, condemnatory account of the entire period can be found in Gao Gao 高岗 and Yan Jiaqi 严家琦, “Wenhua dageming” shinian 文革十年, Tianjin: Tianjin renmin chubanshe 天津人民出版社 1986. See in particular pp. 186-192 and 495-527 for examples of violence against manifestations of the “old China”. For a recent historical analysis, see David Pietrusza, *The Chinese Cultural Revolution*, San Diego: Lucent Books 1996.

<sup>12</sup> In itself proof of the force of inculturation; the Judeo-Christian roots of Marxism had been largely discarded by the Chinese strategist. See Lucien Bianco, *Origins of the Chinese Revolution (1915-1949)*, 1971 for the early development of Mao Zedong’s CCP. Concerning the role of the Bureau of Religious Affairs, see also K. Dean, *Lord of the Three in One*, pp. 263-264. For a (“fundamentalist”) Christian refutation of the deification of Mao Zedong, see Werner Schilling, *Das Heil in Rotchina? - Der 'Neue Mensch' im Maoismus*, Bad Liebenzell: Liebenzeller Missionsverlag / Telos 1975, pp. 81-128.

<sup>13</sup> The deification actually began with the seeming omnipresence of Mao Zedong (and initially also Zhu De) during the Jiangxi Soviet, the Yan’an period and in the “Liberated Areas” (*jiefangqu* 解放区) during the final years of conflict. Thus, Mao Zedong managed to enter the popular picture-text prints (*tuibei tu* 崇拜图) of the 1940s, prophesying China’s salvation by a “king” identified by the character for ‘hair’ (*mao* 毛). See Wolfgang Bauer, *Das Bild in der Weissage-Literatur Chinas: Prophetische Texte im politischen Leben vom Buch der Wandlungen bis zu Mao Tse Tung*, Munich: Hans Moos Verlag 1973, p. 29.

<sup>14</sup> Rudolf Wagner refers to the Mao cult of the Cultural Revolution as an example of quasi-religious devotion, encouraged by the revolutionary state in order to supplant pre-existing religious loyalties. Student marches (*chuanlian* 串联) converging on the centre of the Maoist universe, Tiananmen Gate (after 1976 the Mao Zedong Memorial Hall) are likened to pilgrimages to sites of religious worship. See Rudolf G. Wagner, “Reading the Chairman Mao Memorial Hall: The Tribulations of the Implied Pilgrim”, in: Susan Naquin and Chü-fang Yü (eds), *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites*, pp. 378-383 and 386-399.

Zedong immortal. Thus it comes as no surprise that after several years of cautious political liberalisation, during the Deng Xiaoping reform period, the deceased leader had become part of the popular pantheon: As a patron saint who protects drivers of taxis and lorries and even as a manifestation of the Buddha.<sup>15</sup> The political career of an atheist activist had thus turned full circle: Having failed to eradicate “superstition” from the Chinese masses, Mao Zedong had become deified and integrated into the popular pantheon of the outgoing twentieth century.

From the latter half of the 1980s, local Christian groups which had practised their faith in hiding during the years of the Cultural Revolution began to congregate in public.<sup>16</sup> Most members of these “house churches” were the descendants of Christians who had been converted by European missionaries during the nineteenth century. Contrary to the rulings of the governing party, these independent churches refused to integrate into the Protestant and Catholic successor churches which had replaced the foreign orders and societies after 1949. Interestingly, after one generation of independent development, without direct influence from foreign missionaries, several of the Christian congregations had developed ritual practices which deviated markedly from established orthodoxy.<sup>17</sup> A notable aspect of their development is the

---

<sup>15</sup> The custom of affixing a picture of Mao Zedong next to the steering wheel originates from a report of an accident involving a car and a minibus, which occurred in the late 1980s in Guangdong province. The driver of a car equipped with his “sacred image” survived unscathed, whereas all passengers of the colliding minibus died. The rumour that Mao had been sighted in Gansu province as a reincarnation of the Buddha Gautama reached Beijing in the early 1990s. These personal observations tally with those of Kenneth Dean, who witnessed a procession of several CCP “deities” during the New Year celebrations in Xianyou, 1995. See K. Dean, *Lord of the Three in One*, p. 293.

<sup>16</sup> The same is of course true for other formerly suppressed religious movements, such as the syncretic cults of Fujian province. See K. Dean, *Lord of the Three in One*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>17</sup> The following statements are partially based on Jean-Paul Wiest and Edmond Tang (eds), *The Catholic Church in Modern China - Perspectives*, Maryknoll / New York: Orbis Books 1993. Wiest’s depiction of contemporary Catholic Christianity in the PRC, however, is centred on the development of the official Three Self branch of Catholicism. Jean Charbonnier, “The ‘Underground’ Church”, in: Wiest and Tang, *The Catholic Church in Modern China*, pp. 52-70, contains valuable information concerning the nature and organisation of illegal congregations. It may, however, be helpful to distinguish between an *orthodox* underground church - politically independent, yet dogmatically pursuant to Roman Catholicism or mainstream Protestantism - and genuinely syncretic movements. A

predominant role women assume as part of the congregation - possibly for the same reasons as their fellow believers who, two centuries earlier, approached Saint Mary for miracles concerning motherhood.<sup>18</sup> Or maybe simply because in the business-oriented world of Deng Xiaoping's China, as around most of the world, men look askance at the expression of religious sentiment. Nevertheless, men generally monopolise the senior positions within popular churches and the Three-Self churches alike, and have become involved in greater numbers since the end of Mao Zedong's China. By the end of the 1980s, Christian sects such as the True Jesus Church (*Zhen yesu jiaohui* 真耶穌教會), had proliferated to an extent which caused foreign observers to refer to the phenomenon as China's "Christianity fever". Rural in origin, and usually dominated by devotional and charismatic expressions of faith, these churches were quickly branded as "heterodox" by both state and the official clerical order.<sup>19</sup> Risking the wrath of both the established Three-Self clergy and the ever-observant state, these expressions of religious dissent represent a border-line case between open defiance and the desire to be recognised as established religious entities. In fact, some of the earlier formations were quickly rivalled by sects of fundamentalist orientation, such as the "True True Jesus Church". During the 1990s, self-appointed populist preachers in

---

further differentiation between "Christocentric" forms of syncretism and teachings which merely integrate elements of Christianity into other expressions of folk religion would reveal the full complexity of the contemporary popular Christianity in China. Most known "heterodox" Christian sects have so far only been covered by specialist church publications in Hong Kong, such as *Tian Feng* 天風, a publication of the Protestant churches in Hong Kong.

<sup>18</sup> May M. Cheng estimates that some eighty-five percent of practising Christians in Guangdong province are women. See her [unpublished] contribution "Christianity Fever: Contagion and Constraint of a Religious Movement in Contemporary China", given at a research colloquium organised by the Overseas Ministries Study Center (Research Enablement Programme), Nashville / Tennessee, August 1996.

<sup>19</sup> Indeed, it was stressed that there was no difference between "superstitious cults" of Chinese / Asian origin and "Christian sects" imported from the United States. Reflecting official opinion, Gu Lieming 顧力明, in: "*Zhongguo bu rong xiejiao* 中國不容邪教" ("China will not tolerate heretical teachings"), in: *Minzhu yu fazhi* 民主與法治 ("Democracy and Legal System", Beijing), 4/1996, pp. 18-20, stated that while China's constitution guaranteed the freedom of religion, "sectarians" had placed themselves outside any constitutional protection (中國憲法保障宗教自由, "sectarianism is not the same as religion"). See *ibidem*, p. 19

the Chinese hinterland spearheaded an upsurge in popular Christian activity. By referring to Jesus in demonistic terms as the “King Exorcist”, “Conqueror of Disease”, “God of Wealth”, and encouraging their spiritual flock to use bibles and crucifixes as talismans, local congregations defied appeals by both government and officials from the Three Self churches to return to Christian orthodoxy.<sup>20</sup> What the majority of these “rebel churches” have in common is a “post-denominational” definition of identity, quite possibly a reflection of the increasing degree of pluralism in Chinese society.<sup>21</sup> To speak of a Christianity “fever” as one of the hallmarks of religious life in the 1990s may indeed be accurate, but would show ignorance of the fact that popular religious movements had covertly existed in the People’s Republic since its inception, despite rigorous campaigns by the Communist state. Private reports from the late 1990s confirm a CCP campaign against a movement in Yunnan referring to itself as the “White Lotus”. Party officials had been implicated in the movement, which was said to be strong in the villages of the mountain terrain.<sup>22</sup> As if a revival of the White Lotus was not newsworthy in itself, the year 1999 witnessed the emergence of a Buddhist mass movement with the name *Falun gong* 法轮功 (“Energy of the Wheel of [Buddhist] Law”).<sup>23</sup> A combination of meditative *qigong* and Buddhist principles, the

---

<sup>20</sup> On the “Christianity Fever” of the Deng Xiaoping era, see Alan Hunter and Chan Kim-Kwong, “Current Trends in Chinese Protestantism” [*Leeds East Asia Papers*, number 32], University of Leeds 1996, pp. 1 and 5-7.

<sup>21</sup> See the special edition of *Bridge / Qiao* 桥, LXXV (February 1996), dedicated to the increasing popularity of the True Jesus Church in the PRC during the 1990s. A parallel development in contemporary Japan has recently been analysed in Mark R. Mullins, *Christianity Made in Japan: A Study of Indigenous Movements*, Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press 1998.

<sup>22</sup> I owe this information to a journalist in Hong Kong, reflecting reports of October 1997 in the Hong Kong press.

<sup>23</sup> The eternally turning wheel of the dharma has been a constant theme in popular Buddhist practice. An opening panel of the fifteenth century “Imperial Ultimate Book” (*Huangji baojuan* 皇极宝卷) begins with the words: “May the sun of the Buddha increase in its brilliance; May the wheel of the Dharma always turn.” See Overmyer, *Precious Volumes*, p. 51 ff. The ideas of the Falungong founder Li Hongzhi are set out in *Falun xiulian dafa* 法轮修炼大法 (“Practising the Wheel of Law as a martial art”), Beijing: *Zhongguo guangbo-dianshi chubanshe* (“Chinese Radio and Television Publishing House”) 1995, in particular chapter I.7 on the place of the movement between orthodoxy



movement currently attracts some two million adherents.<sup>24</sup> This may constitute a numerically negligible amount, but produced a stern response by state officials and the official media - in particular after the peaceful mass protest in front of the headquarters of the CCP in June 1999.<sup>25</sup> The acute reaction by the state to such a relatively small movement indicates that similar movements during the late imperial period were seen as equally threatening to public order. The vocabulary employed by the state officials at the close of the twentieth century was indeed reminiscent of the terminology introduced in this thesis: Followers are branded “completely wrong” and “politically motivated”, modern equivalents of “heretical” and “subversive”; the leadership of the cult, under the spiritual guidance of Li Hongzhi, stands accused of “deceiving the ignorant masses” into a superstitious belief.<sup>26</sup> An equally striking parallel can be found in the stringent prohibition imposed on Party members and state officials. The attack against corrosion from within the established order resembles the terror meted out against representatives of the Qing elite during the eighteenth century, in particular against members of the Manchurian Banner clans.

---

and heresy. See also *Zhuan Falun* 轉法輪 (“On the Wheel of Law”), Hong Kong: *Falun Fofa chubanshe* 法輪佛法出版社 [1998].

<sup>24</sup> The sectarian leadership itself claimed a global adherence of around one hundred million; see *The Economist*, 31 July 1999, pp. 60-61. For comparative purposes, the peak of Christian conversion was reached in the 1920s with just under three million “official” converts. See K. S. Latourette, *A History of Christian Missions*, p. 5, for figures on 1920s Christianity. Statistics based on the (Protestant) *China Year Book* and the Catholic church put the total number of all officially registered Christians during the period 1935-1941 at just under four million. See C. Cary-Elwes, *China and the Cross*, pp. 292-295.

<sup>25</sup> Most comprehensively to date in the publication *Li Hongzhi and his “Falun Gong” - Deceiving the Public and Ruining Lives*, edited by Ji Shi 季石 and published in Beijing by New Star Publishers 新星出版社 in 1999 (English translation of: *Qishihairende li hongzhi jiqi “falungong”* 季石害人李洪志及其“法轮功”). The language used by the author reflects that of the Communist government, which in turn is reminiscent of the late imperial hunt against “heresy”. The editors make ample use of gruesome depictions (written and photographic) of the movement’s victims.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. the “People’s Daily” (*Renmin ribao* 人民日報) leader of 22 July 1999.

Future research exposing parallels between late imperial and modern religious movements will undoubtedly reveal further insight, in particular with reference to heterodox Christian sects. For the purpose of this thesis, however, the results relating to popular Christianity during the period of prohibition may suffice. The complex phenomenon of indigenous responses to alien concepts and the creation of social traditions perpetuating the converts' identity deserves academic attention in itself.

## Appendix:

1. Carlo da Castorano's letter to Matteo Ripa, reprinted in M. Fatica (ed.), *Matteo Ripa, Giornale (1705-1724), Volume II (1711-1716)*, pp. 354-355:

*“[I christiani] sono realmente perseguitati dagl'altri capi e settarij della medesima setta Zin ly kiao, quali tuttavia perseverano e la causa è perché prima ricevevano da loro denari e presenti, ma hora che sono christiani, non hanno più a far con loro, .... , e per impedire che non entrino altri e quei che sono entrati nella Santa Legge la lascino vivere in pace quei che si riducono alla Santa Legge; e per ciòe conseguire non solo spendono denari, ma spargono infamie e calunnie contro la Santa Legge et Europei predicatori di essa, persuadendo di più appresso li mandarini che sono christiani falsi e solo entrano nella Santa Legge per fuggire il castigo”.*

### Free translation:

“[The Christians] are in reality persecuted by the leadership and by the followers of the sect *Xinglijiao*, who are still holding out. This is because they at first received money and presents from them, though Christian converts now no longer have any dealings with them. ... To prevent others from converting to Christianity and to entice those who already converted by promising a peaceful life in return for retracting from Christianity ... they not only spare no expense but also hurl lies and abuse against the Christian faith and its European preachers, while talking the officials into believing that they are all false Christians who only converted in order to escape punishment [for originally adhering to the White Lotus]”.

2. The confession of the priest Paulus Van:

*“Ego infrascriptus sacerdos maximus peccator contra sanctitatem et excellentiam sacramentorum: In civitate Cing cu hien cum quatuor mulieribus conjungatis in audiendo earum confessionem colloquuntur fui aliqua verba obscena intra. Confessionem iam terminatam, et copulatur cum illis, et post copulam impositis poenitentiis eas absolvi. Ex his supradictis, unam alteram corpolicem peccati, cum post aliquot dies altera vice pro confessione ad me accesserit, cum ea iterum peccavi eodem genere peccatorum, et circumstantia, ut supra, et iterum absolvi. In Cing kia gan in excipienda confessione unius mulieris conjungate loquuntur verba obscena ... et revera immediate post absolutionem peccavi cum ea in loco confessionis. ... In eodem loco iterum cum quinque mulieribus conjunctis colloquuntur fui aliqua verba inhonesta in confessione, et postea intra eandem confessionem feci actionem impudicam, tangendo scilicet partem verecundam, et finita earum confessionem eas etiam absolvi, ex quibus est una puella, ista habet aetatem 13. aut 14. annorum neque aliqui responsata. In Ciuan Khi Li cum quinque mulieribus conjungatis audienda earum confessione dixi verba turbia ad excitandum amorem venerem, proinde cum una quocum habui copulam in eadem confessione jam finita, et post copulam tres ex istis absolvi, alias vero duas permissi abire sine absolutione. In Nan pa so cum sex mulieribus coniugatis leguntur aliqua verba obscena in confessione, et immediate post auditam confessionem earum feci copulam cum istis, et post copulam impositis poenitentiis, eas absolvi. Insuper cum aliis duabus mulieribus coniugatis peccavi tantum, tangenda nempe parte verecunda immediate post absolutionem, sed in*

*ipsamed confessione jam fuit verba, et signa inhonesta. Postremo retigi partem verecundam aliarum trium mulierum conjugatorum, simulque cum istis colloquuntur aliqua verba turbia intra audiendam earum confessionem; istis autem tribus utra dedi absolutionem necne, non bene recordor, sed fortasse eas etiam absolvi. Hic numerus personarum iterum supradictorum, cum quibus peccavi, est certus; sed utrum exceptis supra-enumeratis personis cum aliquibus aliis mulieribus similia peccata commiserim necne, non bene recordor; unde denuntio me etiam pro dubio fortasse peccasse cum quinque aut sex personis femineis.*

*Ad pedes vostra Amp. Ill[ustrissi]me me gravissimorum atque perhorrendorum criminum reum prostratur. ut per D[ivi]ni nostri Jesu Christi passionem, ac amarissimam mortem mei misserimi misereatur presento. [...] Ego sacerdos indigni[ssi]mus servus Paulus Van<sup>27</sup>*

English translation:

“I, the undersigned priest, am the worst sinner against the holiness and excellence of the sacraments: When I took the confessions of four women in the town Cing cu hien, I included some obscene words in my advice. After the confession had come to an end, I copulated with them, and afterwards I imposed some penances and absolved the women. [...] One of the women approached me some days later to be granted confession ..., and I sinned with her in the same manner, but again I absolved her.” In Cing kia gan, I exchanged obscene words with one woman, with the intention that she copulate with me after confession, and she then indeed sinned with me immediately after having been absolved, in the very same confessional. ... In the same locality, five women appeared together for confession, which resulted in several compromising words. After confession I acted shamefully, touching their private parts, [but] I absolved them after the confession. Among these women was a young girl, 13 or 14 years of age. In Ciuan Khi Li, while listening to the confessions of five women, I said disturbing things in order to excite their lust. When the confessions had ended I copulated with them, absolving three of the women afterwards - but verily allowing the two others to leave without absolution. In Nan Pa So I read out obscenities together with six women during confession, copulating with them immediately after confession. After this act, I made them do their penances and absolved them. On top of this, I sinned together with another two women by touching them indecently, and through shameful words and gestures during confession. After this I touched the private parts of the three other women, uttering obscenities while they were saying their confessions. Whether I absolved all of these three I cannot remember, but maybe I did absolve them after all. The account of the above-named, with whom I sinned is certain. But it is possible that I also committed similar sins against other women - I really do not remember. In the meantime I suspect that I have to admit to seducing another five or six women. I prostrate myself at your feet, Excellency, having committed the gravest and most horrendous sins, and I present myself to the forgiveness of our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us such a bitter death. ... I, the most worthless servant, Priest Paulus Van.”

---

<sup>27</sup> APF SC, series III, *Cina e Regni Adiacenti*, 1806-1811, folia 140 R/V and 142 R.





- Gu-xin shengjing* 古新聖經 - “Old and new testaments” (Florian Bahr)
- Jiaoyao xulun* 教要學論 - “Prolegomena to the essential aspects of the faith”  
(Ferdinand Verbiest)
- Kouduo richao* 口述日抄 - “Daily record of oral exhortations” (Li Jiubiao)
- Lixiu yijian* 流袖一見 - “Mirror for the encouragement of cultivation” (Li Jiugong)
- Po-xie xiang bian* 破邪相辨 - “Detailed refutation of heresy” (Huang Yubian)
- Ruijianlu* 睿見錄 - “Records of accurate reflections” (I. Kögler et al.)
- Sanshan lunxueji* 三山論學集 - “Recorded sermons of the three mountains”  
(Mensaert: *Dialogues de Fuchou*, Julio Aleni)
- Shengjiao rike* 聖教日課 - “Daily Lessons in the Holy Faith” (Longobardo, et al.)
- Shengjing guangyi* 聖經廣義 - “Expounding the blessings of the sacred scripture”
- Shengmujing* 聖母經 - “Scripture of the holy mother” (possibly Rho, 1625)
- Shengmu xingshi* 聖母行世 - “Life of the holy mother”
- Shengnian guangyi* 聖年廣義 - “Almanac of blessings” (de Mailla)
- Shengnian guangyi quanbian* 聖年廣義全編 - “A complete almanac of blessings”
- Sheng ruowang niebomu zhuan* 聖若望尼波墨傳 - “Vita of St John Nepomuk”  
(Bahr)
- Shengshi churao* 聖世壽報 - “Nourishment for a prosperous age” (de Mailla)
- Sheng shaowulüe jiuri jingli* 聖沙烏略九日經禮 - “Nine-day rite according to Saint  
Xavier” (Lin Deyao)
- Sheng yinajue* 聖因雅爵 - “Vita of Ignatius Loyola” (An Guoning and Lin Deyao)
- Shengyong xujie* 聖永續集 - “Sequel to the holy hymns” (F. Bahr)
- Tian-shi mingbian* 天時明辨 - “A discourse on the differences between  
Buddhism and Christianity” (Yang Tingyun)
- Tianzhu jiaoyao* 天主教要 - “Summary of the religion of the lord of heaven”  
(Matteo Ricci)
- Tianzhu jing* 天主經 - “Scripture of the lord of heaven” (anon.)
- Tianzhu jiangsheng yanxing jilüe* 天主降生言行集略 - “Recorded  
phenomena on the words and deeds of the Lord during his descent to  
the world” (Julio Aleni and Emmanuel Diaz)
- Tianzhu jingshu* 天主經書 - The sutra of the heavenly lord (anon.)
- Tianzhu shengjiao rike* 天主聖教日課 - “Daily lessons in the sacred faith”  
(Luigi Buglio and Emmanuel Diaz)
- Tianzhu shengjiao shengren xingshi* 天主聖教聖人行世 -  
“Lives of the saints of the Christian church” (Vagnoni, 1624)
- Tianzhu shengjiao sizi jingwen* 天主聖教四字經文 - “Four character  
hymnal on the sacred faith in the lord of heaven” (J. Aleni)
- Tianzhu shilu* 天主實錄 - “True summary of the lord of heaven” (M. Ruggieri)
- Tianzhu shiyi* 天主事宜 - “True account of the lord of heaven” (M. Ricci)
- Wanwu zhenyuan* 萬物真源 - “The true origin of all things” (Julio Aleni)
- Xie tianzhu jing* 謝天主經 - “Showing remorse to the lord of heaven”
- Xinjing* 新經 - “Scripture of faith” (anon., probably not Ruggieri & Ricci: *Prière de la  
foi*, 1585; cf. Mensaert)
- Xing-li zhenquan* 行理真詮 - “True explanation of nature and principle” (Sun Zhang)

*Yesu shengti daowen* 耶穌聖體道文 - “Prayers reflecting on the sacred body of Jesus” (Julio Aleni)

*Yijian daoyi* 一簡道義 - “Simplified guide to the art of praying” (Shen Dongxing)

*Yi ping* 一平 - “Righteousness comprehended” (anon.)

*Zhaoyong shenjing* 照用神鏡 - “Reflections of the eternal sacred mirror” (Lin Deyao)

*Zhaozao tian, di, renwu zhenzhu* 造物天主真主 - “True lord of all creation” (anon.)

*Zhujing tiwei* 經題 - “The basic meaning of the lord’s scriptures” (Yin Hongxu)

*Zhu sumi pian* 珠璣篇 - “Illuminating coarse superstitions” (anon.)



## Bibliography

*All listed titles  
are either cited in the footnotes  
or were consulted for  
general background knowledge.*

### 1. Primary Sources

#### A. First Historical Archives 第一历史档案馆

**Category:** 明清档案 “Records of Great State Council Memorials”

**Sub-Category:** 农民起义 “Peasant Rebellions” (Section III, Catalogue 166)

Scroll	Document [+sub-no.]	Date-Officials	Reported matter
8875	2750 [7]	24/10/1814-Ma Huiyu	<i>Request to spare apostates</i>
8875	2750 [8]	1/9/1819-Qishan	<i>Trial of Zhu Rong and Tong Ao</i>
8875	2751 [9+10]	1851-Pan Duo	<i>Report on ‘English aliens’</i>
8876	2763 [19]	29/3/1815-Guang Bao	<i>Zhang Dapeng and his ‘gang’</i>

**Sub-Category:** 帝国主义入侵 “Intrusion of Imperialism”  
(Section III, Catalogue 167)

Scroll	Document [+sub-no.]	Date-Officials	Reported matter
9258	408	1813-Qin Jie	<i>Signboards and doorscrolls with Christian characters</i>
9258	492 [3]	11/10/1746 -Gioro Yarhashan	<i>Request for swift action against Christianity</i>
9258	492 [8]	26/7/1754-E Rongan	<i>Trial of Zhang Ruose</i>
9258	492 [9]	18/7/1754 -Zhuang Yougong	<i>Confessions of Xie Wenshan</i>
9258	492 [11]	28 May 1758 -Li Chuanguang	<i>Arrival of aliens in Fujian</i>
9258	492 [12]	25/12/1759 and 28/8/1760-Wu Shitian	<i>Westerners in Guangdong</i>
9258	492 [14]	Wu Shaoshi-3/9/1767	<i>Collusion of Chinese Christians with foreigners</i>
9258	492 [17]	29/10/1767-Wu Shaoshi	<i>On Christian ‘Buddha statues’</i>
9258	492 [18]	4/12/1767 Zhong Yin & Li Shiyao	<i>Itinerant medics as Christian missionaries</i>
9258	492 [19-20]	21/5/1774	<i>On He Guoda</i>
9258	492 [21]	26/1/1777-Li Xinbo	<i>Infiltration of foreigners</i>

9258	492 [23]	4/12/1784-Sun Shiyi	<i>Diminishing role of foreigners</i>
9258	492 [24]	8/4/1782-Tangjuoluoba	<i>Arrest of Christian traders</i>
9258	493 [26]	16/9/1746-Jiang Bing	<i>Testimony by Fu Zuolin</i>
9258	493 [28]	6/8/1751-Heng Wen	<i>Discovery of scriptures</i>
9258	493 [29]	18/10/1751-Heng Wen	<i>ditto</i>
9258	493 [30]	12/7/1754-Fang Fucheng	<i>Zhili Christianity</i>
9258	493 [32]	6/11/1768-Asiha	<i>Interrogation of Wang Xiangsheng and others</i>
9258	493 [33]	13/1/1769-Asiha	<i>Trial of Wang Xiangsheng</i>
9258	493 [34]	9/2/1782-Mei Guang	<i>Trial of Li Tianyi</i>
9258	493 [35+36]	4/1/1805-Cao Wenzhi, Wu Mingqiu and Liu E	<i>Writings connected to Adeodato case</i>
9258	493 [38]	30/5/1805-De Lengtai	<i>A Christian vision</i>
9260	498 [37]	7/5/1806-Lu Kang, Wen Ning and Fu Hui	<i>Trial of Tong Lan</i>
9260	498 [38]	2/7/1805-Dong Gao	<i>Apostasies</i>
9260	498 [39]	9/5/1805-Eledengbao	<i>Christian Banner trials</i>
9260	498 [46]	16/6/1805-Dong Gao	<i>Banner Christians</i>
9261	501 [12]	1814-Ying Shan	<i>Apostate Kui Min and Christian Zhao Heng</i>
9261	501 [14]	1815-Na Yancheng	<i>Anti-heresy trial</i>
9261	501 [15]	1815-He Ning	<i>The Christian Zhao clan</i>
9261	501 [16+17]	1806	<i>Christian village Sanggu</i>
9261	501 [18]	1817-Heng An & Wang Yanbo	<i>Christian ritual objects discovered in Beijing</i>
9261	501 [20]	23/12/1817-Mian Kai	<i>Negative influence of spouses</i>
9261	501 [21]	1806	<i>Sichuan Christians</i>
9261	501 [22]	1806-Ying He & Mu Zhang'a	<i>Confession of barber</i>
9261	501 [37]	21/7/1800-Chang Ming	<i>Christian-Muslim collusion</i>
9261	503 [8]	23/5/1812-Yan Jian	<i>Christian Miao missions</i>
9261	503 [13]	1815-Xu Kun	<i>Christian <u>baojia</u> Gubei</i>
9261	503 [45]	22/9/1812-Yan Jian	<i>Christianity in Sichuan</i>
9261	503 [39]	10/8/1805-Fang Weidian	<i>Persecutions in Shaanxi</i>
9261	503 [48]	January 1815 - Tang Zun & Ke Hen	<i>Hua county Christianity</i>

**Category:** □□□□□□□□ “Palace Memorials Approved by the Emperor’s Hand”

**Sub-Category:** □□□□□□□□□ “Religious Affairs”

number	year	Reported matter	.
4	1806	<i>Christianity in Shaanxi province</i>	
9	1806	<i>The proper place for women</i>	

n.b.: See also Appendix for *zhupi* cited from secondary sources.

**B. Archivum de Propaganda Fide**

**Category: Acta Congregationis Particularis super rebus sinarum et indiarum  
orientalium (Scritture riferite nei Congressi) - Indie Orientali/Cina**

**Annual collections: 1733-1736**

ff. 2-4: Letter by Dominican to Rome, complaining about the hostile attitude of officials in Fujian; 1733  
folium 121 R: Matteo Ripa, *Relazione della Espulsione de' Missionarii della Cina*; 1733  
ff. 166-177: Antonio Enigues, *Remarques sur la Relation de la persecution arrivée à la fin de 1733*

**1737-1740**

folium 20: Instructions by Father Pedrini to the Christians of Beijing; 2 November 1736

**1779-1781**

folium 117: Petrus Maria Lai on his mission in Hu-Guang  
folium 236: Request for help by Chinese cleric Cassius Joseph Taj to Vatican; 25 December 1779  
ff. 266-269 and 283-284: Report on the situation in Nanjing

**1806-1811**

ff. 24-25: Conforti on *yao hui*  
ff. 241-242: Gioacchino Salvetti (OFM) on the forbidden sale of medical substances

**Category: Scritture riferite nei Congressi, series III  
- Cina e Regni Adiacenti**

**Annual collections: 1806-1811**

ff. 16-17: Joseph Nunez Ribeira to Beijing on the reasons of the failure of the China mission  
folium 30: C. J. Létondal to Pedro Gravina in Madrid; Macau 19 January 1806  
ff. 105-111: Letter by A. Luigi da Signa, containing list of new Chinese missionaries; *Puhuo*, Shanxi 7 March 1806  
ff. 114 and 141: *Formula Iuramentum* (Rites)  
folium 138: State of the mission in Shanxi  
ff. 140 R/V and 142 R: The confessions of Paulo Van  
ff. 145-148: Letter by F. Delgado (OFM) on the Rites  
folium 138: Letter reporting on Charles Tan, Joseph Li (Peter Zai) and Philip Li  
folium 161: Giovanni Battista Marchini; Macau, 16 October 1806  
ff. 165-166: Letter of 1806 by Alexandre Gouvea to Cardinal Borgia, referring to Simon Fan

ff. 167 and 194: Letter by Denis Chaumont to Boiret in Paris; London, 26 October 1806  
folium 174: Antonius de Calatia on pagan funeral rites among the Christians of Shanxi; 26 October 1806  
ff. 175-178: Letter by Giovanni Antonio de Pompejana; *Henceu / Hunan*, 29 October 1806,  
ff. 179-180: by Alexandre Gouvea to the Vatican, on school for Chinese novices; 5 November 1806  
ff. 187-188: Ghislain (CM) Beijing to Paris; 6 November 1806  
ff. 190-191: *Osservazioni sull'erezione d'un collegio di Sinesi nelle Isole Philippine*  
ff. 195-196: E. D. di San Goldino to Rome from Macau; Oct. 1806.  
ff. 202-208: Vicar Apostolic of Sichuan, Cardinal Dufresse, on the situation in Sichuan  
folium 215 R: Letter by Joseph Milt concerning a case of divorce; Fujian, 27 December 1806  
ff. 223-226: Protest note by the ex-Jesuits, contained in letter sent from Pondicherry; 21 May 1804  
ff. 235-238: G. B. Marchini from Macau; 8 December 1806  
ff. 398-402 Emmanuele Conforti to Rome from Beijing, on the effects of the Adeodato affair; 1 October 1807

**Category:**                      **Scritture Originali della Congregazione Particolare dell' Indie e Cina (SOCP) - *Indie Orientali***

**Annual collections:**    **1723-1725**  
ff. 21-23: Giuseppe Cerù: *Relazione del Metodo...*  
ff. 40-42: Domenico Perroni to the Propaganda offices; 1723.  
ff. 125-131: Copy of Perroni's letter  
folium 147 ff.: Letter by Perroni on the '*Editto del Mandarino Zum-tu e Vicere di Fo-kien contra la religione christiana*'; 1723  
ff. 188-189: Johannes Müllener on the effects of the Yongzheng edict

**1779-1781**  
ff. 127-130: Nathanaël Burger on the role of Chinese priests in forbidden commercial activity; Shaanxi, August 1779

**1793-1795**  
ff. 247-249: Protest letter sent by the Chinese priest Stephen Bao to the Propaganda

**1806-1811**  
folium 19: Joseph Nunez Ribeira to the Propaganda Fide; 1806  
folium 22: *Dubia* against the prohibition of ancestral worship

folium 23: Letter on the persecution of 1805; 1806  
folium 37: E. D. de S. Goldino, bishop of Macau; circa 1806

## 1817

- ff. 9-16: Propaganda report on the China mission 1805-1814
- ff. 13-14: Letter to AP on the state of the Beijing mission
- ff. 15-17: Letter to Propaganda on the difficulties for missionaries in Shanxi and Shaanxi, November 1811 (with list of clerics active in the late 18th century)
- folium 17: On Christian sororities
- ff. 31-33: Jiaqing edict of 1811, on the prohibition of contacting missionaries in the capital
- ff 33-36: *Propaganda* report on the state of the China mission in the aftermath of the Adeodato Affair
- folium 37 R: Goldino on Michele Siè and Raffaele Ijon

**C. *Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana***

**Category: Lat. Vat. 12849**

*Brevis narratio itineris ex Italia usq. ad Chinam, et de emptione huius domus dicata Sanctae Mariae de Aracoeli in hac urbe Xan Tunensi de Túng Chăng fu, per nos Patrem Joannem Baptistam de Illiceto, Patrem Gabrielem Antonium a S. Joanne, Prem. Carolum a Castorano, et Fratrem Vincentiu a Roiate Ordinis Fratrum Minorum de Observatione S.P.N. Francisci factis itineris ex Italia usq. ad Chinam, ..., by Carolus a Castorano (1724) [circa 120 folia].*

#### D. Printed sources

**1. Chinese local gazetteers**

*Zhongguo difangzhi jicheng* 中国地方志集成 (“A compilation of China’s local gazetteers”), Shanghai: *Shanghai shuju* 上海书店 1993:

Provincial series /Vol./Reign period - locality / Section

Jiangsu series/ 13 / Qianlong - Changzhou □□□□/ 'Altars and temples' □□□□

Jiangsu series /14 / Qianlong - Yuanhe □□□□ / 'Altars and temples' □□□□

Sichuan series / 54 / Kangxi - Shunqing 康寧 / 'Temples and sacrificial altars'  
 康寧

Zhejiang series / 30 / Yongzheng - Ningbo 余姚 / 'Daoism and Buddhism'  
余姚 and 'Temples' 余姚

## 2. Rare Gazetteers held in Japan

366







11. **Letters by Antoine Gaubil**

Renée Simon (ed.), *Le P. Antoine Gaubil, S.J.: Correspondence de Pékin 1722-1759*, Geneva: Droz 1970:

<u>Page</u>	<u>Matter</u>	<u>Date</u>
127-129	letter to P. Magnan in Paris on intra-missionary rivalry,	6 November 1726
152-160	letter to Cayron on the ancestor rites,	4 October 1727
382	to Souciet (St Petersburg) on “false sects” in Shandong and Henan,	23 July 1734

## E. Individual printed documents

- Congregatio Sancti Officii Acta causae rituum seu ceremoniarum sinensium*, Venice: Antonio Bortoli 1709 [Library of the Propaganda Fide].
- Domingo Fernandez Navarette, “An Account of the Empire of China, Historical, Political, Moral and Religious, A short description of that empire, and notable examples of its emperors and ministers, Written in Spanish”, in: A. and J. Churchill (eds), *A Collection of Voyages and Travels ... in six volumes*, London: Churchill 1732, volume I, pp. 1-380 [British Library 566.k.6].
- Francisco Gonzales de San Pedro, *Relation de la nouvelle persecution de la Chine Jusqu'à la mort du Cardinal de Tournon; Dressé par le R. P. François Gonzales de S. Pierre, Religieux de l'Ordre de S. Dominique et Missionnaire Apostolique à la Chine ... sur une plus ample relation des missionnaires ... qui ont été chassés de la Chine*, [Paris] 1714 [British Library 867.g.17.(1)].
- Alexander Gouvea, *Calendarium generale perpetuum Diocesis Pekinensis*, [Beijing] 1788 [Beijing Library, Beitang collection, no. 2875].
- Charles Thomas Maillard de Tournon, *The Letter of the Cardinal of Tournon ... written ... to ... the Bishop of Conon, to Comfort him in the Prison in which he was confined ... at Pekin under the custody of the Jesuits*, 1709 [British Library 489.g.14].
- Martino Martini, *Novus Atlas Sinensis. Beyfugung vom Reich Catayo, Historia von dem Tartarischen Krieg, etc.*, Amsterdam: J. Blaeu 1655 [British Library Maps 18.e.2].
- idem* *Novus Atlas Sinensis a Martino Martinio Societatis Iesu Descriptus et serenissimo archiduci Leopoldo Guilielmo Austriaco Dedicatus cum privilegio S.C. Maj. et Ordinis Foed. Belg.*, Vienna 1655 [Beijing Library, Beitang collection].
- William Willis Moseley, *The Origins of the First Protestant Mission to China and History of the Events which Induced the Attempt, and Succeeded in the Accomplishment of a Translation of the Holy Scriptures into the Chinese Language and of the casualties which assigned to ... Dr Morrison in the carrying out of his plan. To which is appended a new account of the origin of the British and Foreign Bible Society*, London: Simpkin and Marshall 1842 [British Library 4765.bb.23].
- Josephus Suarez, S.J., “Nachrichten aus China - Leben und Sterben ... des zwölfften Sunischen Printzen Josephi”, in: *Neuer Welt-bott mit allerhand Nachrichten der Missionarien der Soc. Jesu*, 1728, volume II, pp. 291-301 [British Library 4767.g.3].
- Yong Zheng □□□□ emperor, Shangyu □□□□ [British Library, Or. MS 6787].

## F. Other printed sources and resources:

- Henri Cordier, *Bibliotheca Sinica*, Paris: Guilmoto 1904 and Geuthner 1924.
- Archie Crouch, *Christianity in China: A Scholars' Guide to Resources in the Libraries and Archives of the U.S.*, Armonk: M. E. Sharpe 1989.

*Daqing lili* 大清曆 [1842imprint], volume 9, section “*□□□□□□□□*” (“Pernicious writings and rumours”).

*Daqing fagui daquan* 大清方略大全 [n.pl.:] *Zhengxueshe* 正學社 1910/1911 [foreword by Yi Kuang 易匡 dated Xuan Tong 1, i.e. 1908].

Albert Herrmann, *Historical and Commercial Atlas of China* [Harvard-Yenching Institute Monograph Series I], Cambridge/Mass.: Harvard University Press 1935.

Charles Le Gobien (ed.), *Lettres Édifiantes et curieuses de la Chine écrites par des missionnaires jésuites 1707* [British Library 867.e.22(5)].

*idem* *Nouvelles lettres édifiantes de la Chine et des Indes Orientales*, Paris: 1818-1823 [British Library G.12597-604].

*idem* et al. (eds), *Lettres Édifiantes et curieuses de Chine par des missionnaires jésuites 1702-1776*, Paris: Garnier-Flammarion 1979.

*Ningxia tushuguan guancang tianzhujiao tushu mulu* 宁夏图书馆馆藏天主教图书目录 (English parallel title: *Collection Directory of Catholic Books of Ningxia Library*), Ningxia: *Ningxia tushuguan* 1993.

Ken Perry, John Hinnells et al. (eds), *Blackwell Dictionary of Eastern Christianity*, Oxford: Blackwell 1999.

*Qinding daqing huidian* 钦定大清会典事例, Shanghai: *Tushujicheng yinshuju* 图书集成印书局 1893.

*Qingmo jiaonan* 清墓教案 (“Religious cases from the end of the Qing”), First Historical Archives (eds), Beijing: *Zhonghua shuju* 中华书局 1996.

Ren Xuyu 任叙宇 (ed.), *Zongjiao cidian* 宗教辞典 (“Dictionary of religious terms”), Shanghai *cishu chubanshe* 辞书出版社 1985.

*Shanghai tushuguan xiwen zhenben shumu* 上海图书馆西文珍本书目 (Shanghai Library Catalogue of Western Rare Books), Shanghai: *Shanghai shehuikexueyuan chubanshe* 上海社会科学院出版社 1992.

Robert Streit, *Bibliotheca missionum*, Münster / Aachen: Internationales Institut für Missionswissenschaftliche Forschung 1929, volume 5 [Asia].

Tan Qixiang 谭其骧, *Zhongguo lishi ditu* 中国历史地图 (“Historical atlas of China”), Beijing: *Ditu chubanshe* 地图出版社 1987, volume VIII [Ming and Qing].

Laurence G. Thompson, *Chinese Religion in Western Languages: A Comprehensive and Classified Bibliography of Publications in English, French and German through 1980*, Tucson / Arizona: Association for Asian Studies 1985.

*idem* *Chinese Religion: Publications in Western Languages, 1981 through 1990*, Michigan / Ann Arbor: Association for Asian Studies 1993.

Hubert Verhaeren, *Catalogue de la bibliothèque du Pé-T'ang*, Beijing: Imprimerie des Lazaristes 1949.

*Xing'an huilan* 兴安回览, [n.p.] *Tushu jichengju* 图书集成局, October 1834.

## 2. Monographs and Articles:

- Emily M. Ahern, *The Cult of the Dead in a Chinese Village*, Stanford: University of California Press 1973.
- Alabiso Alida, "Castiglione and the Introduction of European Painting and Architecture in China", unpublished paper for the *International Symposium 'China and the World in the Eighteenth Century'*, Beijing June 1995.
- Charles Wilfrid Allan, *Jesuits at the Court of Peking*, Hong Kong / Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh 1935.
- Mary M. Anderson, *Hidden Power: The Palace Eunuchs of Imperial China*, Buffalo / New York: Prometheus Books 1990.
- Robert Anthony, "Brotherhoods, Secret Societies and the Law in Qing-Dynasty China", in: David Ownby and Mary Somers Heidhues (eds), *Secret Societies Reconsidered*, pp. 190-211.
- Aziz Suryad Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity*, Millwood / New York: Kraus Reprints 1980.
- Bai Shouyi 白寿彝, *Bai shouyi minzu zongjiao lunwenji* 白寿彝民族宗教论文集 "Essays on Ethnicity and Religion by Bai Shouyi", Beijing: *Beijing shifan daxue chubanshe* 北京师范大学出版社 1992.
- Hugh David Roberts Baker, *Chinese Family and Kinship*, London: Macmillan 1979.
- Richard Ball, *Christianity in China - State and Work of the Native Evangelists Contained in a Series of Tracts*, London: Partridge and Oakey 1850.
- Thomas Bamat and Jean-Paul Wiest (eds), *Popular Catholicism in a World Church: Seven Case Studies in Inculturation*, Maryknoll / New York: Orbis Books 1999.
- idem* "The Many Faces of Popular Catholicism", in: *idem* (eds), *Popular Catholicism in a World Church*, pp. 1-16.
- Suzanne Wilson Barnett and John King Fairbank (eds), *Christianity in China: Early Protestant Missionary Writings*, Cambridge/ Massachusetts and London: Committee on American-East Asian Relations of the Department of History and Council of East Asian Studies / Harvard University 1985.
- Timothy H. Barrett, "Chinese Sectarian Religion", in: *Modern Asian Studies* XII-2 (April 1978), pp. 333-352.
- idem* "History Writing and Spirit Writing in Seventeenth Century China", in: *Modern Asian Studies* XXIII-3 (July 1989), pp. 597-608.
- idem* "Ignorance and the Technology of Information: Some Comments on China's Knowledge of the West on the Eve of the 'Western Invasion'", in: *Asian Affairs: Journal of the Royal Society for Asian Affairs*, XXVI-1 (February 1995), pp. 20-31.
- Beatrice S. Bartlett, *Monarchs and Ministers: The Grand Council in Mid-Ch'ing China*, Berkeley and Oxford: University of California Press 1991.
- Wolfgang Bauer, *Das Bild in der Weissage-Literatur Chinas: Prophetische Texte im politischen Leben vom Buch der Wandlungen bis zu Mao Tse Tung*, Munich: Hans Moos Verlag 1973.
- Martin Baumann, *Deutsche Buddhisten - Geschichte und Gemeinschaften*, Marburg: Diagonal Verlag 1993.

- idem* "Culture Contact and Valuation: Early German Buddhists and the Creation of a 'Buddhism in Protestant Shape'", in: *Numen* XLIV (1997), pp. 270-295.
- Daniel H. Bays, "Christianity and the Chinese Sectarian Tradition", in: *Ch'ing-Shih Wen-T'i*, IV-7 (June 1982), pp. 33-55.
- idem* "Christianity and Chinese Sects: Religious Tracts in the Late Nineteenth Century", in: S. W. Barnett and J. K. Fairbank (eds), *Christianity in China*, pp. 121-134.
- idem* (ed.) *Christianity in China: From the Eighteenth Century to the Present*, Stanford: Stanford University Press 1996.
- Johannes Beckmann, "Die Lage der katholischen Missionen in China um 1815", in: *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft* II (1946), pp. 217-223.
- idem* "China im Blickfeld der jesuitischen Bettelorden des 16. Jahrhunderts", in: *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft* XIX (1963), pp. 195-214 and XX (1964), pp. 27-41, 89-108.
- Seely J. Beggiani, *Early Syriac Theology: With Special Reference to the Maronite Tradition*, Lanham / Maryland: University Press of America 1983.
- Judith A. Berling, *The Syncretic Religion of Lin Chao-En*, New York: Columbia University Press 1980.
- Henri-M. Bernard, "Les adaptations chinoises d'ouvrages européens: Bibliographie chronologique depuis la venue des portugais à Canton jusqu'à la Mission Française de Pékin, 1514-1688", in: *Monumenta Serica* X (1945), pp. 1-57 and 309-388.
- John W. Berry, "Acculturation as Varieties of Adaptation", in: A. M. Padilla (ed.), *Acculturation: Theory, Models, and Some New Findings*, Boulder: Westview Press 1980, pp. 2-25.
- Robert A. Bickers (ed.), *Ritual and Diplomacy: The Macartney Mission to China, 1792-1794 (1992 Conference of the British Association for Chinese Studies marking the Bicentenary of the Macartney Mission to China)*, London: Wellsweep Press 1993.
- Leonard Blussé and Harriet T. Zurndorfer (eds), *Conflict and Accommodation in Early Modern East Asia: Essays in Honour of Erik Zürcher*, Leiden, New York and Cologne: E. J. Brill 1993.
- Eugene Powers Boardman, *Christian Influence upon the Ideology of the Taiping Rebellion, 1851-1864*, New York: Octagon Books 1964.
- Derk Bodde, "Prison Life in Eighteenth Century Peking", in: *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, LXXXIX (1969), pp. 311-333.
- idem* and Clarence Morris, *Law in Imperial China - Exemplified in 190 Ch'ing Dynasty Cases translated from the Hsing-an hui-lan, with Historical, Social and Juridical Commentaries*, Cambridge / Massachusetts: Harvard University Press 1967.
- Richard Bohr, "Liang Fa's Quest for Moral Power", in: S. W. Barnett and J. K. Fairbank, *Christianity in China*, pp. 35-46.
- François Bontinck, *La lutte autour de la liturgie chinoise aux XVII<sup>e</sup> et XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles*, Louvain and Paris: Université Lovanium de Léopoldville 1962.
- Fernando Bortone, *I Gesuiti alla Corte di Pechino - due secoli e mezzo di eroismo per la diffusione della fede cattolica in Cina 1552-1813*, Rome: Desclée and C. / Ed. Pontifici 1969.

- David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shift in Theology of Mission*, Maryknoll / New York: Orbis Books 1991.
- Charles Ralph Boxer, *The Christian Century in Japan, 1549-1650*, Berkeley / Los Angeles: University of California Press and London: Cambridge University Press 1951.
- Demetrius Charles de Kavanagh Boulger, *The Life of Yakoob Beg: Athalik Ghazi, and Badaulet; Ameer of Kashgar*, London: William H. Allen 1878.
- Fiona Bowie, "The Inculturation Debate in Africa", in *Studies in World Christianity*, V-1 (Spring 1999), pp. 66-92.
- Joseph van den Brandt, *Les Lazaristes en Chine 1697-1935*, Beijing: Imprimerie des Lazaristes 1936.
- William D. Bray, "The Hidden Christians of Ikitsuki Island", in: *The Japan Christian Quarterly*, XXVI-2 (April 1960), pp. 76-84.
- John Breen and Mark Williams (eds), *Japan and Christianity - Impacts and Responses*, Basingstoke / England: Macmillan Press 1996.
- Bridge - Church Life in China Today / Qiao □□*, (Special edition dedicated to the True Jesus Church in the PRC), [The Christian Study Centre of Chinese Religion and Culture, Hong Kong] LXXV (February 1996), pp. 1-13.
- Cynthia Brokaw, *The Ledgers of Merit and Demerit - Social Change and Moral Order in Late Imperial China*, Princeton: Princeton University Press 1985.
- Timothy Brook, "Religion for Confucians - The Buddhism of Dong Qichang, the Christianity of Xu Guangqi", unpublished paper for: *Symposium on the History of Christianity in China*, Hong Kong 2-4 October 1996.
- Marshall Broomhall, *The Bible in China*, London: China Inland Mission 1934.
- Peter Brown, "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity", in: J. Martin and B. Quint, *Christentum und Antike Gesellschaft*, pp. 391-439.
- Cai Wenning □□□□□□ and Phil Newell, "Zhongguo guixianxing ji □□□□□□□□□□□□□□" ("Tales from the Dark Side - Understanding Chinese Ghosts"), in: *Guanghua* □□□□ / *Sinorama*, XXI-10 (October 1996), pp. 78-89.
- Cao Weian □□□□□□, "Jidujiao zai zhongguo" □□□□□□□□□□□□□□ ("Christianity in China"), in: *Zhongxue lishi jiaoxue cankao* □□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□ ("Reference materials for the teaching of history in secondary schools"), 8/1995, pp. 4-7.
- María José Caram, "The Shape of Catholic Identity among the Aymara of Pilcuyo", in: Th. Bamat and J.-P. Wiest (eds), *Popular Catholicism in a World Church*, pp. 56-86.
- Columba Cary-Elwes, *China and the Cross: Studies in Mission History*, London: Longmans, Green and Co. 1957
- John Cayley and Ming Wilson (eds), *Europe Studies China - Papers from an International Conference on the History of European Sinology*, London: Han-Shan Tang 1995.
- Wing-Tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, Princeton: Princeton University Press and Oxford: Oxford University Press 1969.
- Jonathan Chao, "Toward a Chinese Christianity: A Protestant Response to the Anti-Imperialist Movement", *Republican China*, XVII-2 (April 1992), pp. 95-109.

- Jean Charbonnier, *Histoire des Chrétiens de Chine*, Paris: Desclée 1992.
- Robert Chard, "Rituals and Scriptures of the Stove Cult", in: David Johnson (ed.), *Ritual and Scripture in Chinese Popular Religion*, pp. 3-54.
- Chen Laisheng 陈来, *Wuxingde suolian - shenmide zhongguo jinji wenhua* 五行中的索连 - 神密的中华精神文化 ("Invisible chains - The mystery of China's taboo culture"), *Shanghai sanlian shudian* 三联书店 1993.
- Chen Yuan 陈元 (ed.), *Kangxi yu Luoma shijie guanxi wenshu yingyinben* 康熙与罗马世界关系文书影印本 ("Diplomatic correspondence between the Kangxi emperor and Rome"), Taipei: *Wenhai chubanshe* 文海出版社 1974 [originally published Beijing 1932].
- May M. Cheng, "Christianity Fever: Contagion and Constraint of a Religious Movement in Contemporary China" [unpublished working paper, read at the Overseas Ministries Studies Center colloquium, Nashville / Tennessee, August 1996].
- Cheng Xiao 程小 and Zhang Ming 张明, "Wanqing xiangshehui de yangjiaoguan: dui jiaogan de yizhong wenhua xinli jieshi" 晚清乡社的阳教观念: 对教化的文化心理解释 ("The Perception of Christianity by Village Society in Late Imperial China: Psychological Explanations for State Action against Religious Groups"), in: *Lishi yanjiu* 历史研究 1995 年第 10 期 ("Historical research"), CCXXXVII-5 (October 1995), pp. 108-116.
- Ch'ien Mu 钱穆 (Chün-tu Hsüeh and George O. Totten, translators), *Traditional Government in Imperial China - A Critical Analysis*, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press and New York: St Martin's Press 1982.
- Julia Ching (Qin Jiayi 秦嘉仪), *Chinese Religions*, London: Macmillan 1993.
- Chow Kai-wing 周凯荣, *The Rise of Confucian Ritualism in Late Imperial China: Ethics, Classics and Lineage Discourse*, Stanford: Stanford University Press 1994.
- "Christianity and Chinese Nationalism in the Early Republican Period: A Symposium", special edition of *Republican China*, XVII-2 (April 1992).
- Raymond W. Chu and William G. Saywell, *Career Patterns in the Ch'ing Dynasty: The Office of Governor General*, Ann Arbor: Centre for Chinese Studies (University of Michigan) 1984.
- Ch'ü T'ung-tsu 瞿同祖, *Law and Society in Traditional China*, Paris / The Hague: Mouton & C.ie, 1961.
- idem* 同祖, *Local Government in China under the Ch'ing*, Stanford University Press 1969.
- Hubert Cieslik, "Das Christenverbot in Japan unter dem Tokugawa Regime", in: *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft* VI (1950), pp. 175-192, 256-278 and VII (1951), pp. 24-36.
- Maria Cigliano, *Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi Ricciani (Macerata-Roma, 22-25 ottobre 1982)*, Macerata: Centro di Studi Ricciani 1984.

- Allen D. Clark, *A History of the Church in Korea*, Seoul: The Christian Literature Society of Korea 1971.
- Norman Howard Cliff, "The Life and Theology of Watchman Nee, including a Study of the Little Flock movement which he founded", MPhil thesis: Open University 1983 (UMI print).
- Paul A. Cohen, *China and Christianity: The Missionary Movement and the Growth of Chinese Antiforeignism 1860-1870*, Cambridge / Massachusetts: Harvard University Press 1967.
- Myron L. Cohen, "Souls and Salvation: Conflicting Themes in Chinese Popular Religion", in: J. L. Watson and E. S. Rawski, *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China*, pp. 180-202.
- Claudia von Collani, *Die Figuristen in der Chinamission*, Frankfurt: Lang 1981.
- idem* "Kilian Stumpf S.J. and the Chinese Rites Controversy after 1710", unpublished paper for: *Symposium on the History of Christianity in China*, Hong Kong 2-4 October 1996.
- Fernand Combaluzier, "Un inventaire des Archives de la Propagande (milieu du XVIIe siècle)", in: *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft*, II (1946), pp. 187-200, 274-282.
- Nicole Constable, "The Village of Humble Worship - Religion and Ethnicity in a Hakka Protestant Community in Hong Kong", PhD thesis: University of California 1989.
- idem* *Christian Souls and Chinese Spirits: A Hakka Community in Hong Kong*, Berkeley: University of California Press 1994.
- Cathérine Cornille, *The Guru in Indian Catholicism - Ambiguity or Opportunity of Inculturation?*, Louvain: Peeters Press 1991.
- John Correia-Afonso, *The Jesuits in India (1542-1773)*, Anand: Gujarat Shaitya Prakash 1997.
- R. Costa *One Faith, Many Cultures: Inculturation, Indigenization and Contextualization*, Maryknoll / New York: Orbis Books 1988.
- Ralph R. Covell, *Buddha, Confucius and Christ - A History of the Gospel in Chinese*, Maryknoll / New York: Orbis Books 1986.
- idem* *The Liberating Gospel in China: The Christian Faith among China's Minority Peoples*, Grand Rapids / Michigan: Baker Books 1995.
- idem* *Pentecost on the Hills in Taiwan: The Christian Faith among the Original Inhabitants*, Pasadena / California: Hope Publishing House 1998.
- Vincent Cronin, *The Wise Man from the West - An Account of the Missionary Service in China of Father Matteo Ricci*, London: Rupert Hart-Davis 1955.
- idem* *A Pearl to India - The Life of Roberto de Nobili*, London: Rupert Hart-Davis 1959.
- Cui Dan, *The Cultural Contribution of British Protestant Missionaries and British-American Cooperation to China's National Development during the 1920s*, Lanham: University of America Press 1998.
- James Sylvester Cummins, "Two Missionary Methods: Mendicants and Jesuits", unpublished paper for: *Symposium on the History of Christianity in China*, Hong Kong 2-4 October 1996.
- Dai Yi 戴一, *Qianlong ji qi shidai* 乾隆及其时代 ("Qianlong and his times"), Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe 1992.



- Claude Philibert Dabry de Thiersant, *Le catholicisme en Chine au VIIIe siècle de notre ère*, Paris: Ernest Leroux 1877.
- Charles Dallet, *Histoire de l'Eglise de Corée, précédée d'une introduction sur l'histoire, les institutions, la langue, les moeurs et coutumes coréens*, Paris: Librairie Victor Palmé 1874.
- Francesco D'Arelli and A. Tamburello (eds), *La Missione Cattolica in Cina tra i secoli XVII-XVIII - Emiliano Palladini (1733-1793), Congregatio della Sacra Famiglia di Gesù Cristo, Procuratore della Sacra Famiglia de Propaganda Fide a Macao: Atti del Convegno (Lauria, 8-9 ottobre 1993)*, Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale 1995.
- Winfried Daut, "Die 'Halben Christen' unter den Konvertiten und Gebildeten des 4. und 5. Jahrhunderts", in: *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft*, LV (1971), pp. 171-188.
- Fei-ling Davis, *Primitive Revolutionaries in China - A Study of Secret Societies in the Late Nineteenth Century*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press 1971.
- Clarence B. Day: *Chinese Peasant Cults - Being a Study of Chinese Paper Gods*, Shanghai, Hong Kong and Singapore: 1940.
- William Theodore De Bary, *Self and Society in Ming Thought*, New York: Columbia University Press 1970.
- Pasquale M. D'Elia, *Le origini dell'arte cristiana cinese (1583-1640)*, Rome: Reale Accademia d'Italia 1939.
- Martin Dudley, "The Book in the Liturgy: Ceremonies and Practicalities", unpublished conference paper for 'The Church and the Book' - Summer Conference of the Ecclesiastical History Society, University of Wales, Lampeter/Llanbedr-Pont-Steffan 19-22 July 2000).
- Benjamin A. Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology - Intellectual and Social Aspects of Change in Late Imperial China*, Cambridge / Massachusetts and London: Council on East Asian Studies (Harvard University) and Harvard University Press 1984.
- idem* *Classicism, Politics, and Kinship: The Ch'ang-chou School of New Text Confucianism in Late Imperial China*, Berkeley, Los Angeles and Oxford: University of California Press 1990.
- Jan Jacob Maria de Groot, *Sectarianism and Religious Persecution in China - A Page in the History of Religions*, Leiden: E. J. Brill and Co. 1901 [reprinted Taipei: *Jingwen shuju* 經文書局 1963].
- idem* *The Religious System of China*, Leiden: E. J. Brill 1882-1910.
- Kenneth Dean, *Lord of the Three in One - The Spread of a Cult in Southeast China*, Princeton / New Jersey: Princeton University Press 1998.
- Joseph Dehergne, "La Mission de Pékin à la veille de la condamnation des rites", in: *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft*, IX (1953), pp. 91-108.
- idem* "Les missions du nord de la Chine vers 1700 - Étude de géographie missionnaire", in: *Archivum Historicum Societatis Jesu* XXIV (1955), pp. 251-294.
- idem* "La Chine centrale vers 1700 [I] - L'Évêché de Nankin. Étude de géographie missionnaire", in: *Archivum Historicum Societatis Jesu* XXVIII (1959), pp. 289-330.
- idem* "La Chine centrale vers 1700 [II] - Les vicariats apostoliques de la côte. Étude de géographie missionnaire", in: *Archivum Historicum Societatis Jesu* XXX (1961), pp. 307-366.

- idem* “La bibliothèque des Jésuites français de Pékin au premier tiers du XVIIIe siècle”, in: *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême Orient*, LVI (1969), pp. 125-150.
- idem* *Répertoire des Jésuites de Chine de 1552 À 1800*, Rome / Paris: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu 1973.
- Giacomo Di Fiore, *Lettere di Missionari dalla Cina (1761-1775) - La vita quotidiana nelle missioni attraverso il carteggio di Emiliano Palladini e Filippo Huang con il Collegio dei Cinesi in Napoli*, Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale 1995.
- idem* “Emiliano Palladini e i missionari del Collegio dei Cinesi”, in: F. d’Arelli and A. Tamburello (eds.), *La Missione Cattolica in Cina*, pp. 229-272.
- Frank Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China*, London: Hurst 1992.
- idem* “Racial Discourse in China: Continuities and Permutations”, in: F. Dikötter and Barry Sautman (eds.), *The Construction of Racial Identities in China and Japan*, London: Hurst 1997, pp. 12-33.
- Henri Doré, *Recherches sur les superstitions en Chine (vol. V): La lecture des talismans chinois*, Shanghai: Imprimerie de T’ou-sè-wè 1913.
- idem* *Recherches sur les superstitions en Chine (vol. VI): Le Panthéon chinois (vol. VI)*, Shanghai: Imprimerie de T’ou-sè-wè 1914.
- idem* *Recherches sur les superstitions en Chine (vol. XVII): Sommaire historique du bouddhisme*, Shanghai: Imprimerie de T’ou-sè-wè 1936.
- Du Liangwei 中國古代宗教研究 (“Research into China’s ancient religion”), Taipei: *Taiwan xuesheng shuju* 台灣學聲書局 1983.
- Adrianus Cornelis Dudink (Du Dingke 杜定克), “The Rediscovery of a Seventeenth Century Collection of Chinese Christian Texts: The Manuscript *Tianxue Jijie* [中國基督教]”, in: *Sino-Western Cultural Relations Journal* XV (1993), pp. 1-26.
- idem* “Christianity in Late Ming China - Five Studies”, PhD thesis: University of Leiden 1995.
- idem* “The Sheng-ch’ao tso-p’i (1623) of Hsü Ta-shou”, in: L. Blussé and H. T. Zurndorfer (eds), *Conflict and Accommodation*, pp. 94-140.
- idem* “The Zikawei Collection in the Jesuit Theologate Library at Fujen 福州 (Taiwan): Background and Draft Catalog”, in: *Sino-Western Cultural Relations Journal* XVIII (1996), pp. 1-40.
- Glen Dudbridge, “Women Pilgrims to T’ai Shan: Some Pages from a Seventeenth-Century Novel”, in: Susan Naquin and Chü-fang Yü (eds), *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites*, pp. 39-64.
- George H. Dunne, *Generation of Giants - The Story of the Jesuits in the last Decades of the Ming Dynasty*, London and New York: Burns & Oates 1962.
- Lloyd E. Eastman, *Family, Fields and Ancestors - Constancy and Change in China’s Social and Economic History, 1550-1949*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1988.
- Wolfram Eberhard, *Guilt and Sin in Traditional China*, Berkeley: University of California Press 1967.
- idem* *Moral and Social Values of the Chinese - Collected Essays*, Taipei: Ch’engwen Publications 1971.

- idem* *A Dictionary of Chinese Symbols*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul 1986.
- Patricia Ebrey, *Confucianism and Family Rituals in Imperial China*, Princeton: Princeton University Press 1991.
- George Elison, *Deus Destroyed - The Image of Christianity in Early Modern Japan*, Cambridge / Massachusetts: Harvard University Press 1973.
- Benjamin A. Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology - Intellectual and Social Aspects of Change in Late Imperial China*, Cambridge / Massachusetts: Harvard University Press 1984.
- idem* *Classicism, Politics and Kinship - The Ch'ang-chou School of New Text Confucianism in Late Imperial China*, Berkeley: University of California Press 1990.
- Mark Elvin, *The Pattern of the Chinese Past*, Stanford: Stanford University Press 1973.
- John Emanuel, "Matteo Ripa and the Founding of the Chinese College at Naples", in: *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft* XXXVII (1981), pp. 131-140.
- Peter M. Engelfriet, "Euclid in China: A Survey of the Historical Background of the First Chinese Translation of Euclid's Elements... and a Study of its Influence up to 1723", PhD thesis: University of Leiden 1996.
- idem* *Euclid in China: The Genesis of the First Chinese Translation of Euclid's Elements, Books I-IV (Jihe Yuanben, Beijing 1607) and its Reception up to 1723*, New York: E. J. Brill 1998.
- Robert E. Entenmann, "Migration and Settlement in Sichuan, 1644-1796", PhD thesis: Harvard University 1982.
- idem* "Chinese Catholic Clergy and Catechists in Eighteenth Century Szechuan", in: *Actes du VIe Colloque International de Sinologie de Chantilly*, Paris: Institut Ricci / Centre d'Études Chinoises 1995, pp. 389-410.
- idem* "The Establishment of Chinese Catholic Communities in Early Ch'ing Szechuan", in: *Actes du VIIe Colloque International de Sinologie de Chantilly*, Paris: Institut Ricci / Centre d'Études Chinoises 1995, pp. 147-161.
- idem* "Catholics and Society in Eighteenth-Century Sichuan", in: Daniel Bays (ed.), *Christianity on China: From the Eighteenth Century to the Present*, Stanford: Stanford University Press 1996, pp. 8-23.
- idem* "Christian Virgins in Eighteenth Century Sichuan", in: Daniel Bays (ed.), *Christianity on China: From the Eighteenth Century to the Present*, Stanford: Stanford University Press 1996, pp. 180-194.
- René Etiemble, *Les Jésuites en Chine 1552-1773: La querelle des rites*, Paris: Juillard 1966.
- John King Fairbank, "The Place of Protestant Writings in China's Cultural History", in: S. W. Barnett and J. K. Fairbank (eds), *Christianity in China* 1985, pp. 1-18.
- Fang Hao 方豪, *Zhongguo tianzhujiaoshi luncong* 中国天主教史论丛 ("Collection of historical essays on Catholicism in China"), Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan 商务印书馆 1947.

- idem* *Fang hao liushi zidinggao* 方豪六十定稿 (‘‘Sixty manuscripts edited by Fang Hao’’), Taipei: *Taiwan xuesheng shuju* 台湾学生书局 1969.
- idem* *Tianzhujiao dong chuan wenxian sanpian* 天主教东传文献三篇 (‘‘Random writings on the spread of Catholicism to the East’’), Taipei: *Taiwan xuesheng shu ju* 台湾学生书局 1984.
- idem* *Zhongguo tianzhu shi renwu zhuan* 中国天主教历史人物传记 (‘‘Biographies of historical figures relating to Catholicism in China’’), Taipei: Academia Sinica 1988.
- Edward L. Farmer, ‘‘Social Regulations of the First Ming Emperor: Orthodoxy as a Function of Authority’’, in: Liu Kwang-Ching (ed.), *Orthodoxy in Late Imperial China*, pp. 103-125.
- Michele Fatica (ed.), *Matteo Ripa: Giornale (1705-1724) - Testo critico, note e appendice documentaria di Michele Fatica*: Vol. I (1705-1711), Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale 1991; Vol. II (1711-1716), Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale 1996.
- Bernard Faure, ‘‘Relics and Flesh Bodies: The Creation of Chan Pilgrimage Sites’’, in: S. Naquin and C.-F. Yü (eds), *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites*, pp. 150-189.
- Fei Xiaotong, *Peasant Life in China: A Field Study of Country Life in the Yangtse Valley*, London: Routledge and Kegan 1939.
- Feng Erkang 冯尔康, *Yongzheng zhuan* 雍正传 (‘‘Biography of the Yongzheng emperor’’), Beijing: *Renmin chubanshe* 人民出版社 1993.
- Fengshen yanyi* 封神演义 (see Xu Zhonglin)
- John Y. Fenton, *Transplanting Religious Traditions - Asian Indians in America*, New York: Praeger 1990.
- Stephan Feuchtwang, ‘‘School-Temple and City God’’, in: G. William Skinner, *The City in Late Imperial China*, pp. 581-608 (and notes pp. 761-764).
- idem* *The Imperial Metaphor - Popular Religion in China*, London: Routledge 1992.
- First Historical Archives (eds), *Zhongguo diyi lishi dang’anguan guancang dang’an gaishu* 中国第一历史档案馆馆藏档案概要 (‘‘A summary of the collections of the First Historical Archives’’), Beijing: *Dang’an chubanshe* 档案出版社 1985.
- idem* *Mingqing dang’an yu lishi yanjiu* 明清档案与历史研究 (‘‘Ming-Qing archives and historical research’’), Beijing: *Zhonghua shuju* 中华书局, 1988.
- A. Flachère, *Monsieur de Guébriant- Le missionnaire*, Paris: Plon 1946.
- Alain Forest and Georges Condominas, *Les missionnaires français au Tonkin et au Siam, XVIIe-XVIIIe siècles - Analyse comparée d’un relatif succès et d’un total échec*, Paris: L’Harmattan 1998, volume III: *Organiser une église, convertir les infidèles*.
- Alain Forest and Yoshiharu Tsuboi (eds), *Catholicisme et sociétés asiatiques*, Tokyo: Sophia University and Paris: L’Harmattan 1988
- Charles H. Foubert, ‘‘An Annotated Bibliography on China and on the Churches’’, in: *IDOC Bulletin* XII (1979), pp. 7-13.
- Louis Frédéric, *Kangxi - Grand Khân de Chine et Fils du Ciel*, Paris: Arthaud 1986.

- Christopher Fyfe and Andrew Walls (eds), *Christianity in Africa in the 1990s*,  
Edinburgh: Centre of Asian Studies 1996.
- Gao Dianshi 高殿士, *Zhongguo lidai tonghua jizhu* 中国历代童话集 “Edited selection of children’s stories from China’s history”), [Jinan:] Shandong daxue chubanshe 山东学出版社 1990.
- Gao Gao 高颢 and Yan Jiaqi 严家骥, “*Wenhua dageming*” *shinian* 文化大启蒙 十年, Tianjin: Tianjin renmin chubanshe 天津人民出版社 1986.
- Blaine Gaustad, “Prophets and Pretenders: Inter-Sect Competition in Qianlong China”, in: *Late Imperial China* XXI-1 (June 2000), pp. 1-40.
- Gen P.A., *Die Missionstätigkeit des heiligen Franz Xaver in Japan aus japanischer Sicht*, St Augustin: Steyler Verlag 1957.
- Thomas Gerholm and Yngve Georg Lithman (eds), *The New Islamic Presence in Western Europe*, London: Mansell 1990.
- Jacques Gernet, *Chine et christianisme - action et réaction*, Paris: Gallimard 1982.
- idem* “Gli ambienti intellettuali cinesi all'epoca del Ricci”, in: *Atti del convegno internazionale di studi Ricciani*, pp. 101-120.
- idem* (and Janet Lloyd, transl.) *China and the Christian Impact - A Conflict of Cultures*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1985.
- idem* “Problèmes d’acclimatation du christianisme dans la Chine du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle”, in: Alain Forest and Yoshiharu Tsuboi (eds), *Catholicisme et sociétés asiatiques*, pp. 35-46.
- Roberta Gilchrist, *Gender and Material Culture: The Archaeology of Religious Women*, London: Routledge 1994.
- Herbert A. Giles (transl. and annot.), *Elementary Chinese: Santzuching*, Shanghai: Kelly & Walsh 1910.
- idem* and Herbert Allen, *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio*, Shanghai: Kelly & Walsh 1908.
- Robert M. Gimello, “Chang Shang-Ying on Wu-T’ ai Shan”, in: S. Naquin and C.-F. Yü (eds), *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites*, pp. 89-149.
- Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms - The Cosmology of a Sixteenth Century Miller*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press 1980.
- idem* *Ecstasies - Deciphering the Witches’ Sabbath*, Harmondsworth: Penguin 1991.
- N. J. Girardot, “Chinese Religion and Western Scholarship”, in: J. Whitehead, Y.-M. Shaw and N. J. Girardot (eds), *China and Christianity*, pp. 83-112.
- Sita Ram Goel, *History of Hindu-Christian Encounter*, New Delhi: Voice of India 1989.
- José Maria Gonzáles, *Misiones Dominicanas en China - 1700-1750*, Madrid: Missionalia Hispanica 1952.
- Bryna Goodman, *Native Place, City and Nation: Regional Networks and Identities in Shanghai, 1853-1937*, Berkeley: University of California Press 1995.
- Anne Swann Goodrich, *Chinese Hells: The Peking Temple of Eighteen Hells and Chinese Conceptions of Hell*, St. Augustin: Monumenta Serica 1981.
- L. Carrington Goodrich, *The Literary Inquisition of Ch’ien-lung*, Baltimore: Waverley 1935.
- Gael Graham, *Gender, Culture and Christianity: American Protestant Mission Schools in China, 1880-1930*, New York: Peter Lang 1995.

- Wilfred C. Griggs, *Early Egyptian Christianity - From its Origins to 451 C. E.*, Leiden: E. J. Brill 1990.
- Willem A. Grootaers, "Les deux Stèles de l'église du Nan-t'ang à Pékin", in: *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft*, VI (1950), pp. 246-255.
- James Huntley Grayson, *Early Buddhism and Christianity in Korea - A Study in the Implantation of Religion*, Leiden: E. J. Brill 1985.
- L. Grove and Chr. Daniels, *State and Society in China - Japanese Perspectives on Ming-Qing Social and Economic History*, Tokyo: Tokyo University Press 1984.
- Gu Lieming 郭力明, "Zhongguo bu rong xiejiao 中国不容邪教" ("China will not tolerate heretical teachings"), in: *Minzhu yu fazhi* 民主与法治 ("Democracy and legal system", Beijing), 4/1996, pp. 18-20.
- P. Gugleminetti, "From Inculturation to Transculturation: Christianity and China", in: *East Asian Pastoral Review* XXII-4 (1985), pp. 379-392.
- Léonide Guiot, *La Mission du Su-tchuen au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle: Vie et apostolat de Mgr Pottier*, Paris: Téqui 1892.
- Robert Gulik, *Sexual Life in Ancient China*, Leiden: E. J. Brill 1961.
- Theodor Hamberg, *The Visions of Hung Siu-Tshuen and the Origin of the Kwang-si Insurrection*, Hong Kong: China Mail Office 1854.
- Sang-Chan Han, *Beziehungen zwischen dem Schamanismus und dem Verständnis des Heiligen Geistes in der protestantischen Kirche in Korea: Religionsphänomenologische und missionstheologische Untersuchungen*, Hamburg: Verlag an der Lottbek 1991.
- Hanfeizi* 韩非子 (see Tchang Fou-jouei)
- Eric O. Hanson, "Political Aspects of Chinese Catholicism", in: James Whitehead, et al. (eds), *China and Christianity*, pp. 134-153.
- Craig Harline, *The Burdens of Sister Margaret: Inside a Seventeenth-Century Convent*, London: Yale University Press 2000.
- Stevan Harrell, "The Concept of Soul in Chinese Folk Religion", in: *Journal of Asian Studies* XXXVIII-3 (May 1979), pp. 519-528.
- Ann M. Harrington, *Japan's Hidden Christians*, Chicago: Loyola University Press 1993.
- Adrian Hastings (ed.), *A World History of Christianity*, London: Cassell 1999.
- He Xingliang 何兴良, *Zhongguo ziranshen yu ziran chongbai* 中国自然神与自然崇拜 ("China's nature spirits and worship of nature"), Shanghai sanlian shudian 三联书店 1995.
- Enrique Heras, *La Dinastía Manchù en China*, Barcelona: Librería y tipografía Católica 1918.
- James L. Hevia, "The Macartney Embassy in the History of Sino-Western Relations", in: R. Bickers (ed.), *Ritual and Diplomacy*, pp. 57-80.
- idem* *Cherishing Men from Afar - Qing Guest Ritual and the Macartney Embassy of 1793*, Durham / New Carolina: Duke University Press 1995.
- Jakob Hilber, "Enquête über das Verständnis des 'Vater Unser' auf Formosa", in: *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft* XXI (1965), pp. 213-220.
- Eugene Hillman, *Toward an African Christianity: Inculturation Applied*, New York: Paulist Press 1993.

Ho Ping-ti, *Studies on the Population of China, 1368-1953*, Cambridge / Massachusetts: Harvard University Press 1974.

Hou Jie 侯洁 and Fan Lizhu 樊丽珠, *Zhongguo minzhong zongjiao yishi* 中国民间宗教史 (“Concepts of Popular Chinese Religion”), Tianjin: *Tianjin renmin chubanshe* 天津人民出版社 1994.

Hou Wailu 侯维禄, “*Tianzhujiao chuanru de shidai beijing he yesuhui de zuoyong*”

天主教的传入时代背景及耶稣会的作为

(“The historical background of the beginnings of Catholicism in China and the function of the Jesuits”), in: *Zhongguo sixiang tongshi* 中国思想通史 (“A comprehensive history of ideas in China”), Beijing: People's Press *Beijing renmin chubanshe* 北京人民出版社 1957, vol. IV, ch. 27.

J.F. Howes, “Japanese Christianity and the State”, in: Steven Kaplan (ed.), *Indigenisation*, pp. 75-95.

Paul Stanislaus Hsiang, *The Catholic Missions in China during the Middle Ages, 1294-1368*, Cleveland / Ohio: J. T. Zubal 1984.

Kung-Chuan Hsiao 萧公权, *Rural China - Imperial Control in the Nineteenth Century*, Seattle: University of Washington Press 1960.

Hu Zhenhua 胡振华, *Zhongguo huizu* 中国回教 (“China's Hui Nationality”) Yinchuan: *Ningxia renmin chubanshe* 宁夏人民出版社 1993.

Huang Chun-chieh and Erik Zürcher (eds), *Norms and the State in China*, Leiden: E. J. Brill 1993.

Huang Liuhong 刘洪 (author), Djang Chu 董楚 (translator and editor), *A Complete Book Concerning Happiness and Benevolence - Fu-ch'üan-shu* 福善书: A Manual for Local Magistrates in Seventeenth-Century China, Tucson: University of Arizona Press 1984.

Huang Pei: *Autocracy at Work - A Study of the Yung-cheng Period, 1723-1735*, Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press 1974.

Huang Shijian 黄世坚, *Zhongxi guanxishi nianbiao* 中西关系史年表 (“A chronology of Sino-Western contacts”), Hangzhou: *Zhejiang renmin chubanshe* 浙江人民出版社 1994.

Huang Yi-lung 黄毅, “Mingmo qingchu tianzhujiao chuan hua shi yanjiu de huigu yu zhanwang

明清之际天主教传入华史研究之回顾与展望” (“A retrospective and outlook on research carried out on the proliferation of Christianity in China during the late Ming and early Qing”), in: *Xin shixue* 新史学 (New History), VII-1 (March 1996), pp. 137-169.

Ray Huang, *1587 - A Year of no Significance: The Ming Dynasty in Decline*, New Haven: Yale University Press 1981.

Evarist-Régis Huc, *Le christianisme en Chine, en Tartarie et au Thibet*, Paris: Gaume Frères 1857-58.

*idem* *Souvenirs d'un voyage dans la Tartarie, le Thibet et la Chine pendant les années 1844, 1845 et 1846*, Beijing: Imprimerie des Lazaristes 1924.

- idem* *Souvenirs of a Journey through Tartary, Tibet and China during the Years 1844, 1845 and 1846*, Beijing: Imprimerie des Lazaristes 1931.
- Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, Stanford: Stanford University Press 1985.
- Arthur W. Hummel, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period: 1644-1911*, Washington: US Government Printing Office 1943-1944, vv. 1-2.
- Alan Hunter and Chan Kim-Kwong, "Current Trends in Chinese Protestantism" [*Leeds East Asia Papers* XXXII], Leeds: University of Leeds 1996.
- Ishii Yoneo, *Millenarianism in Asian History*, Tokyo: Institute for the Study of the Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa 1993.
- Francis Jayapathy, "Mukkuvar Catholicism", in: Thomas Bamat and Jean-Paul Wiest (eds), *Popular Catholicism in a World Church*, pp. 183-214.
- Robert Charles Jenkins, *The Jesuits in China and the Legation of Cardinal de Tournon, etc*, London: D. Nutt 1894.
- W. J. F. Jenner, *Journey to the West*, Beijing: Foreign Languages Press 1984.
- Lionel Millard Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism: Chinese Traditions and Universal Civilization*, Durham / North Carolina and London: Duke 1997.
- Ji Shi 卞方 (ed.), *Li Hongzhi and his "Falun Gong" - Deceiving the Public and Ruining Lives*, Beijing: Xinxing chubanshe 卞方出版社, 1999 [title of Chinese edition: *Qishihairen de li hongzhi jiqi falungong* 欺骗世人及其法轮功 卞方出版社 (same publication details)].
- Jiang Zuhua 江祖华, "Jiaohui de shehui xundao yu Taiwan de zuqun wenti" 社会教育、宗教团体与台湾的族群问题 ("The social education of religious communities and the problem of Taiwan's clan affinities"), in: *Logos and Pneuma: Chinese Journal of Theology / Dao feng* 道风 卞方: Hanyu shenxue xuekan 汉语神学学刊 卞方, 2/1995, pp. 273-287.
- Christian Jochim, *Chinese Religions - A Cultural Perspective*, Englewood Cliffs / New Jersey: Prentice-Hall 1986.
- David Johnson, *Ritual and Scripture in Chinese Popular Religion - Five Studies*, Berkeley: Chinese Popular Culture Project 1995.
- idem*, Andrew Nathan and Evelyn Rawski (eds), *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China*, Berkeley: University of California Press 1985.
- The Rev. Johnson, "Tai-Ping-Wang", in: *The New Englander*, July 1871, pp. 389-407.
- David K. Jordan, *Gods, Ghosts, and Ancestors - The Folk Religion of a Taiwanese Village*, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press 1972.
- idem* and Daniel Overmyer, *The Flying Phoenix - Aspects of Chinese Sectarianism in Taiwan*, Princeton: Princeton University Press 1986.
- Stefan Kaiser, "Translations of Christian Terminology into Japanese, 16-19th Centuries: Problems and Solutions", in: J. Breen and M. Williams (eds), *Japan and Christianity*, pp. 8-29.
- Steven Kaplan, "The Africanization of Missionary Christianity: History and Typology", in *Journal of Religion in Africa* XVI-3 (October 1986), pp. 166 - 186.
- idem* (ed.) *Indigenisation - Responses to Western Christianity*, New York and London: New York University Press 1995.



- Bernard Karlgren, *Book of Odes*, Stockholm: Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities 1950.
- Paul R. Katz, *Demon Hordes and Burning Boats: The Cult of Marshal Wen in Late Imperial Chekiang*, New York: SUNY Press 1995.
- Alois Kehl, "Antike Volksfrömmigkeit und das Christentum", in: J. Martin and B. Quint (eds), *Christentum und Antike Gesellschaft*, pp. 103-142.
- David Kelley, "Temples and Tribute Fleets - The Luo Sect and Boatsmen's Associations in the Eighteenth Century", in: *Modern China* VIII-3 (July 1982), pp. 361-391.
- Kim Jeong-Soo [Andreas Kim], "Die Evangelisation Koreas und die Errichtung der katholischen Kirche im 16.-18. Jahrhundert", in: *Zeitschrift für Missionskunde und Religionswissenschaft* LXV (1981), pp. 173-187.
- Kim Sung-hae, "A Reflection of 200 Years of Catholicism and 100 Years of Protestantism in Korea", in: *Zeitschrift für Missionskunde und Religionswissenschaft* LXIX (1985), pp. 105-149.
- Gail King, "Candida Xu and the Growth of Christianity in China in the Seventeenth Century", in: *Monumenta Serica* XLVI (1998), pp. 49-66.
- Hans G. Kippenberg and Brigitte Luchesi, *Lokale Religionsgeschichte*, Marburg: Diagonal Verlag 1995.
- Nicholas Kowalski, "Inventario dell'Archivio 'storico' della Sacra Congregazione 'de Propaganda Fide'", in: *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft* XVII (1961), pp. 9-13, 109-117, 191-200.
- idem* and Josef Metzler, *Inventario dell'archivio storico della Sacra Congregazione per l'Evangelizzazione dei Popoli o 'De Propaganda Fide'* (English parallel title: *Inventory of the Historical Archives of the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples or "De Propaganda Fide"*, Rome: [Propaganda Fide] 1983.
- Joseph Krahl, *China Missions in Crisis: Bishop Laimbeckhoven and his Time 1738-1787*, Rome: Gregorian University 1964.
- Philip A. Kuhn, *Soulstealers - The Chinese Sorcery Scare of 1768*, Cambridge / Massachusetts: Harvard University Press 1990.
- Hans Küng, *Christianity - its Essence and History*, London: SCM Press 1995.
- idem* and Julia Ching, *Christianity and Chinese Religions*, New York: Doubleday 1989.
- Kwok Pui-lan 區佩蘭, *Chinese Women and Christianity 1860-1927*, Atlanta / Georgia: Scholars Press 1992
- Lars Peter Laamann, "The Current State of the Beitang Library", in: *Bulletin of the European Association of Sinological Librarians*, VI (September 1996), pp. 11-13.
- John Lagerwey, "The Pilgrimage to Wu-tang Shan", in: S. Naquin and C.-F. Yü (eds), *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites*, pp. 293-332.
- Lionello Lanciotti, "La religiosità dei cinesi", in Francesco D'Arelli and A. Tamburello (eds.), *La Missione Cattolica in Cina*, pp. 1-23.
- Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christian Missions in China*, London: Society for the Promotion of Christianity and New York: Macmillan 1929.
- idem* *A History of the Expansion of Christianity*, New York: Harper and Brothers 1937-45.
- idem* "The Light of History on Current Missionary Methods", in: *International Review of Missions*, XLII (April 1953), pp. 137-143.

- Adrien Charles Launay, *Journal d'André Ly, prêtre chinois, missionnaire et notaire apostolique 1746-1763*, Paris: Ch. Dounical 1906.
- Johannes Laures, *Nobunaga und das Christentum*, Tokyo: Sophia University 1950.
- idem* *Kirishitan Bunko: A Manual of Books and Documents on the Early Christian Mission in Japan*, Tokyo: Sophia University Press 1957.
- Philippe Lecrivain, *Les missions jésuites*, Paris: Gallimard 1991.
- Joseph Tse-Hei Lee, "Conversion or Protection? Collective Violence and Christian Movements in Late Nineteenth Century Chaozhou", PhD thesis: University of London 2000.
- Lee Shiu-keung, *The Cross and the Lotus*, Hong Kong: Christian Study Centre on Chinese Religion and Culture 1971.
- James Legge (transl. and ed.), *The Chinese Classics with a Translation, Critical & Exegetical, Notes Prolegomena, and Copious Indexes*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press 1960.
- Beatrice Leung and John D. Young, *Christianity in China: Foundations for Dialogue*, Hong Kong: Centre for Asian Studies, University of Hong Kong 1993.
- Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked*, Chicago: Chicago University Press 1983.
- [Li Hongzhi], *Falun xiulian dafa* 法轮功修炼大法 ("Practising the Wheel of Law as a martial art"), Beijing: *Zhongguo guangbo-dianshi chubanshe* 中国广播影视出版社 1995.
- [*idem*] *Zhuan Falun* 转法轮 ("On the Wheel of Law"), Hong Kong: *Falun Fofa chubanshe* 法轮大法出版社 [1998].
- Liji 礼记 (see Liu Dianjue and Chen Fangzheng)
- Liu Dianjue 刘殿杰 and Chen Fangzheng 陈方正 (eds), *Liji zhuzi suoyin* 礼记诸子索引 (A Concordance to the Liji), Hong Kong: *Shangwu yinshuguan* 商务印书馆 1993.
- Li Yu 李瑜 (and Patrick Hanan, transl.), *The Carnal Prayer Mat*, London: Arrow Books 1990.
- Li Zhigang 李志刚, *Jidujiao yu jindai zhongguo wenhua lunwenji* 基督教与中国现代文化论文集 ("Articles on Christianity and modern Chinese culture"), Taipei: *Yuzhouguang chubanshe* 九州出版社 1993.
- Lian Xi, *The Conversion of Missionaries: Liberalism in American Protestant Missions in China, 1907-1932*, Pennsylvania Park: Pennsylvania State University Press 1997.
- Liang Qichao (and Immanuel C.Y. Hsü, transl.), *Intellectual Trends in the Ch'ing Period*, Cambridge / Massachusetts: Harvard University Press 1959.
- Liaozhai zhiyi* (see Pu Songling)
- Chinfa Lien, "Language Adaptation and Taoist Liturgical Texts", in: D. Johnson (ed.), *Ritual and Scripture in Chinese Popular Religion*, pp. 219-246.
- Lin Chih-p'ing, "The Indigenization of the Church and of its Institutions in Hong Kong", in *Ching Feng* XIII-1 (1970), pp. 3-6.
- Lin Hua 林华, Gao Zhiyu 高志宇 et al., *Lishi yihen: Li madou ji mingqing xifang chuanjiaoshi* 历史记忆: 利玛窦及明清西方传教士 ("Traces of history: The tombs of Matteo Ricci and of [other] Western missionaries during the Ming and Qing"), Beijing: *Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe* 中国人民大学出版社 1994.

- Lin Jinshui, 'Min zhong zhugong zeng shi' chutan 簡論中國宗教的演進 ("Preliminary Explorations on the 'Poem of Noble Gifts in the central Min area'") Unpublished paper for: *Symposium on the History of Christianity in China*, Hong Kong 2-4 October 1996.
- Lin Moye, *Tianzhujiao zai zhongguo* 天主教在中國 ("Catholicism in China"), Hong Kong: *Zhongguo xueren chubanshe* 中國學人出版社 1988.
- Lin Zhiping 林智平, *Jidujiao yu zhongguo bentuhua lunwenji* 基督教與中國本土化論文輯 ("Christianity and Chinese inculturation: selected articles"), Taipei: *Yuzhouguang chubanshe* 遠流出版社 1990.
- Ling Oi Ki, *The Changing Role of the British Protestant Missionaries in China, 1945-1952*, Madison / New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press and London: Associated University Press 1999.
- Liu Kwang-Ching (ed.), *Orthodoxy in Late Imperial China*, Berkeley: University of California Press 1990.
- William T. Liu 劉文輝, "Xishu shehui kexue bentuhua de sizheng xingtai 社會學本土化的四種型態" ("Four Major Types of the Indigenization of Sociology"), in: *Xianggang shehui kexue xuebao* 香港社會科學學報 11 (Autumn 1994), pp. 171-193.
- Lo Ping-cheung, "Sin, Liberalism, and Confucian Political Thought - A Comment on Chang Hao's Thesis", in: Beatrice Leung and John D. Young, *Christianity in China: Foundations for Dialogue*, Hong Kong: Centre for Asian Studies / University of Hong Kong 1993, pp. 179-200.
- Kathleen L. Lodwick, *Crusaders against Opium: Protestant Missionaries in China, 1874-1917*, Lexington / Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky 1995.
- Lunyu 呂 (see James Legge)
- Luo Guang 羅光, *Tianzhujiao zai hua chuan shiji* 天主教在華傳布史 ("A historical survey of Catholic missions in China"), Hong Kong: *Zhengxiang chubanshe* 正香出版社 1967.
- Luo Zhufeng (editor), Donald MacInnis and Zheng Xin (translators), *Religion under Socialism in China*, Armonk and London: M. E. Sharpe 1991.
- Jessie Gregory Lutz, *China and the Christian Colleges 1850-1950*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press 1971.
- idem* "Karl F. A. Gützlaff: Missionary Entrepreneur", in: Barnett and Fairbank (eds), *Christianity in China*, pp. 61-88.
- idem* *Chinese Politics and Christian Missions: The anti-Christian Movements of 1920-28*, Notre Dame / Indiana: Cross Cultural Publications 1988.
- idem* "Chinese Christianity and China Missions: Works Published since 1970", in: *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, XX-3 (1996), pp. 98-106.
- idem* and Rolland Ray Lutz, *Hakka Chinese Confront Protestant Christianity, 1850-1900: with the Autobiographies of Eight Hakka Christians, and Commentary*, Armonk / New York: M. E. Sharpe 1998.
- Ma Xisha 馬西沙, "Minjian zongjiao jiushi sixiang de yanbian 民間宗教九十年來的演變" ("The evolution of soterological thinking in popular Chinese religion"), in: *Zhongguo*

*shehuikexueyuan yanjiushengyuan*

*xuebao* 4/1995, pp. 44-50.

*idem* and Han Bingfang, *Zhongguo minjian zongjiaoshi* (“A History of Chinese Popular Religion”), Shanghai: *Shanghai renmin chubanshe* 1992.

Ma Zhao, “Shilun Qianlong shiqi (1736-1796) chajin tianzhujiao shijian”

“A preliminary study of events relating to the prohibition of Christianity during the Qianlong period, 1736-1796”, MA dissertation: *Zhongguo renmin daxue / Qingshi yanjiusuo* (Research Centre for Qing History, People’s University [Beijing]), 1999.

D. MacGillivray (ed.), *A Century of Protestant Missions in China (1807-1907): Being the Centenary Conference Historical Volume*, Shanghai: American Presbyterian Mission Press 1907.

Edward J. Malatesta, “China and the Society of Jesus: An Historical-Theological Essay”, unpublished paper for: *Symposium on the History of Christianity in China*, Hong Kong 2-4 October 1996.

Roman Malek (ed.), *“Fallbeispiel China”: Ökumenische Beiträge zu Religion, Theologie, und Kirche im chinesischen Kontext*, St Augustin / Nettetal: China Zentrum / Steyler Verlag 1996.

Vladimir Vyacheslavovich Malyavin (Ma Liangwen), “Zhongguo minjian zongjiao qushi” (“Trends in Chinese Popular Religion”), in: *Shijie zongjiao yanjiu* (“Research into World Religions”), 1/1994, pp. 122-124.

Leslie Ronald Marchant, *British Protestant Christian Evangelists and the 1898 Reform Movement in China*, Nedlands: University of Western Australia / Centre for Asian Studies 1975.

Fortunato Margiotti, *Il cattolicesimo nello Shansi dalle origini al 1738*, Rome: Edizioni Sinica Franciscana 1958.

Jochen Martin and Barbara Quint (eds), *Christentum und antike Gesellschaft*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 1990.

Henri Maspero, *Le Taoïsme et les religions chinoises*, Paris: Gallimard 1971.

George Hunter McNeur, *Leung Faat (Leang Afa): The First Chinese Protestant Evangelist*, Guangzhou: Church of Christ in China 1930.

Dorothy M. Meade, *The Medieval Church in England*, Worthing: Churchman Publications 1988.

Mei Xinlin, *Xianhua - shenren zhijian de mohuang shijie* (“Fairy tales - the illusory world in between spirits and mankind”), Shanghai: *sanlian shudian* 1995.

Philip A. Mellor, “Protestant Buddhism? The Cultural Translation of Buddhism in England”, in: *Religion XXI-1* (January 1991), pp. 73-92.

Eugenio Menegón, “Surniama Tragoedia: Religion and Political Martyrdom in the Yongzheng Period”, unpublished paper for: *Symposium on the History of Christianity in China*, Hong Kong 2-4 October 1996.

- Josef Metzler, *Die Synoden in China, Japan und Korea 1570-1931*, Paderborn: Schoeningh 1980.
- Georges Mensaert, “L’Établissement de la hiérarchie catholique en Chine, de 1684 à 1721”, in: *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* XLVI (1953), pp. 1-48.
- idem* “Les Franciscains au service de la Propagande dans la Province de Pékin 1705-1785”, in: *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* LI (1958), pp. 161-200 and 273-311.
- Miao Mo 苗 默 and Hui Du 杜 晖, *Zhongguo fengshui shu* 中国风水书 (“The Chinese art of Fengshui”), Beijing: *Zhongguo wenlian chubanshe* 中国文联出版社 1993.
- A. Milon, *Mémoires de la Congrégation de la Mission*, Paris: [Congrégation de la Mission] 1912.
- George Minamiki, *The Chinese Rites Controversy - from its Beginnings to Modern Times*, Chicago: Loyola University Press 1985.
- Mizoguchi Yuuzoo 水谷 雄蔵 (and 吴 启来 Wu Qilai, transl.), “Ming-Qing shiqi de renxinglun” 明清之际的性论 (“Discourses on the Human Character during the Ming and the Qing”, in: Liu Junwen 刘 俊文 and Xu Yang 徐 阳 *Riben xuezhe yanjiu zhongguoshi lunzhu xuanyi* 日本学者研究中国史论著选译 (“Selected Translations of Contributions by Japanese Scholars on Chinese History”, Beijing: *Zhonghua shuju* 中华书局 1993, volume 7: *Sixiang zongjiao* 思想宗教学 (“Philosophy and Religion”), pp. 162-167 and 171-175.
- Joseph de Moidrey, *La hiérarchie Catholique en Chine, en Corée et au Japon (1307-1914)*, Xujiahui [Zi-Ka-Wei] / Shanghai: Imprimerie de l’orphelinat de T’ou-sè-wè 1914.
- idem* *Confesseurs de la foi en Chine 1784-1862*, Xujiahui [Zi-Ka-Wei] / Shanghai: Imprimerie de l’orphelinat de T’ou-sè-wè 1935.
- J. F. Moran, *The Japanese and the Jesuits: Alessandro Valignano in Sixteenth-Century Japan*, London / New York: Routledge 1993.
- Arthur Christopher Moule, *Christians in China before 1550*, London: Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge 1930.
- Mozi 墨子 (see Burton Watson and Gunnar Sjöholm)
- Claudius Müller, *Wege der Götter und Menschen: Religionen im traditionellen China*, Berlin: Reimer Verlag 1989.
- Mark R. Mullins, *Christianity Made in Japan: A Study of Indigenous Movements*, Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press 1998.
- David E. Mungello, *Curious Land - Jesuit Accommodation and the Origins of Sinology*, Stuttgart: F. Steiner Verlag (Wiesbaden) 1985.
- idem* (ed.) *The Chinese Rites Controversy - its History and Meaning*, Nettetal: Steyler Verlag 1994.
- idem* *The Forgotten Christians of Hangzhou*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press 1994.
- idem* “Christianity in the Capital of Shandong, c. 1650-1725”, unpublished paper for: *Symposium on the History of Christianity in China*, Hong Kong 2-4 October 1996.
- Jan Myrdal, *Return to a Chinese Village*, New York: Pantheon Press 1984.
- Ragnar Naess, “Being an Alevi Muslim in South-Western Anatolia and in Norway: The Impact of Migration on a Heterodox Turkish Community”, in:

- Th. Gerholm and Y. Georg Lithman (eds), *The New Islamic Presence*, pp. 174-195.
- Susan Naquin, *Millenarian Rebellion in China: The Eight Trigrams Uprising of 1813*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press 1976.
- idem* "True Confessions: Criminal Interrogations as Sources for Ch'ing History", in: *National Palace Museum Bulletin*, XI-1 (March/April 1976), pp. 1-17.
- idem* *Shantung Rebellion: The Wang Lun Uprising of 1774*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press 1981.
- idem* "Connections between Rebellions: Sect Family Networks in Qing China", in: *Modern China* VIII-3 (July 1982), pp. 337-360.
- idem* "The Peking Pilgrimage to Miao-feng Shan: Religious Organizations and Sacred Site", in: Susan Naquin and Chü-fang Yü (eds), *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites*, pp. 333-377.
- idem* "Transmission of White Lotus Sectarianism in Late Imperial China", in: D. Johnson, A. Nathan and E. Rawski (eds), *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China*, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press 1985, pp. 255-291.
- idem* and Evelyn Rawski, *Chinese Society in the Eighteenth Century*, New Haven: Yale University Press 1987.
- idem* and Chü-fang Yü (eds), *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites in China*, Berkeley and Oxford: University of California Press 1992.
- idem* "Pilgrimages in China", in S. Naquin and C.-F. Yü (eds), in: *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites*, pp. 1-26.
- Andrew Nathan, D. Johnson and Evelyn Rawski, *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China*, Berkeley: University of California Press 1985.
- Gert Naundorf, Karl-Heinz Pohl and Hans-Hermann Schmidt (eds), *Religion und Philosophie in Ostasien - Festschrift für Hans Steiniger zum 65. Geburtstag*, Würzburg: Königshausen and Neumann 1985.
- Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1954-(ongoing).
- Peter Tze Ming Ng, "Historical Archives in Chinese Christian Colleges from before 1949", in: *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, XX-3 (July 1996), pp. 109-112.
- David S. Nivison, "Ho-shen and his Accusers: Ideology and Political Behaviour in the Eighteenth Century", in: D. S. Nivison and Arthur F. Wright, *Confucianism in Action*, Stanford: Stanford University Press 1959, pp. 209-243 (for endnotes, see pp. 358-366).
- Charles Nyamiti, *Christ as our Ancestor: Christology from an African Perspective*, Gweru / Zimbabwe: Mambo Press 1984.
- Ohashi Yukihiro, "New Perspectives on the Early Tokugawa Persecution", in John Breen and Mark Williams (eds), *Japan and Christianity*, pp. 46-62.
- G. C. Oosthuizen, *The Healer-Prophet in Afro-Christian Churches*, Leiden, Boston and Cologne: E. J. Brill 1992.
- Daniel L. Overmyer, "Boatmen and Buddhas: The Lo Chiao in Ming Dynasty China", in: *History of Religions*, XVII/3-4 (February/March 1978), pp. 284-302.
- idem* "Alternatives: Popular Religious Sects in Chinese Society", in: *Modern China* VII- 2 (April 1981), pp. 153-190.

- idem* *Folk Buddhist Religion - Dissenting Sects in Late Traditional China*, Cambridge / Massachusetts: Harvard University Press [1976] 1987.
- idem* *Precious Volumes: An Introduction to Chinese Sectarian Scriptures from the 16th and 17th centuries*, Cambridge / Massachusetts: Harvard University Press 1999.
- David Ownby and Mary Somers Heidhues (eds), *Secret Societies Reconsidered - Perspectives on the Social History of Modern South China and South East Asia*, Armonk / London: M. E. Sharpe 1993.
- Amado M. Padilla (ed.), *Acculturation: Theory, Models, and Some New Findings*, Boulder / Colorado: Westview Press, for the American Association for the Advancement of Science 1980.
- Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels*, Harmondsworth: Penguin 1990.
- Jordan D. Paper, *The Spirits are Drunk - Comparative Approaches to Chinese Religion*, New York: State University of New York Press 1995.
- Berthold Adolf Pauw, *Religion in a Tswana Chieftdom*, Westport / Connecticut: Greenwood Press 1985.
- People's University, Beijing (see *Zhongguo renmin daxue*)
- William Peterson, "Why did they become Christians? Yang T'ing-yun, Li Chih-tsao and Hsü Kuang-ch'i", in: Ronan and Oh (eds.), *East Meets West*, pp. 129-152.
- David Pietrusza, *The Chinese Cultural Revolution*, San Diego: Lucent Books 1996.
- Michael Pollack, *Mandarins, Jews and Missionaries - The Jewish Experience in the Chinese Empire*, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America 1980.
- Earl H. Pritchard, "The Kowtow in the Macartney Embassy to China in 1793", in: *Far Eastern Quarterly*, II-2 (1943), pp. 163-201.
- Pu Songling 蒲松龄, *Liaozhai zhiyi* 聊斋志异, Jinan: *Qilu chubanshe* 齐鲁出版社 1981.
- Michael Pye, "The Transplantation of Religions", in: *Numen* XVI (April 1969), pp. 234-239.
- idem* and Renate Stegerhoff (eds), *Religion in fremder Kultur: Religion als Minderheit in Europe und Asien*, Saarbrücken-Scheidt: Verlag Rita Dadder 1987.
- Qi Qiwei 齐其伟 and Wang Ruji 王汝济, *Wan-qing jiaolan jishi* 晚清教案纪实 ("Notable religious court cases from the late Qing period"), Beijing: *Dongfang chubanshe* 东方出版社 1990.
- Qin Baoqi Qin宝奇, *Qing qianqi tiandihui yanjiu* 清前期天地会研究 ("Research on the Heaven and Earth Society during the early Qing"), Beijing: *Renmin daxue chubanshe* 人民大学出版社 1988.
- idem* *Zhongguo dixia shehui* 中国地下社会 ("China's Underground Societies"), Beijing: *Xueyuan chubanshe* 学苑出版社 1993.
- idem* *Hongmen zhenshi* 洪门正史 "A True Account of the Heaven and Earth Society", Fuzhou: *Fujian renmin chubanshe* 福建人民出版社 1995.
- Qing Xitai 清季 and Tang Dachao 唐大潮, *Daojiaoshi* 道教史 ("History of Daoism"), Beijing: *Zhongguo shehuikexue chubanshe* 中国社会科学出版社 1994.

- Dorothy A. Raber, *Protestantism in Changing Taiwan: A Call to Creative Response*, Pasadena: William Carey Library 1978.
- Evelyn Rawski, *Education and Popular Literacy in Ch'ing China*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press 1978.
- idem* "Elementary Education in the Mission Enterprise", in: Barnett and Fairbank, *Christianity in China*, pp.135-152.
- Ren Cheng 任成, *Zhongguo minjian jinji* 中国民间禁忌 ( "Popular taboos of China"), Beijing: Zuoja chubanshe 作家出版社 1991.
- M. Howard Rienstra (ed.), *Jesuit Letters from China 1583-1610*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1986.
- Karl Josef Rivinius, "Inkulturation", in: *Stimmen der Zeit* CCXII-10 (October 1994), pp. 687-696.
- Camille de Rochemonteix, *Joseph Amiot et les derniers survivants de la Mission Française à Pékin (1750-1795)*, Paris: Alphonse Piccard and Fils 1915.
- Charles E. Ronan and Bonnie B. C. Oh (eds), *East Meets West - The Jesuits in China 1582-1773*, Chicago: Loyola University Press 1988.
- Erhard Rosner, "Frauen als Anföhrerinnen chinesischer Sekten", in: Gert Naundorf, K.-H. Pohl and H.-H. Schmidt (eds), *Religion und Philosophie in Ostasien*, pp. 239-246.
- Antonio Sisto Rosso, *Apostolic Legations to China of the Eighteenth Century*, South Pasadena: P.D. and Ione Perkins 1948.
- idem* "Pedro de Piñuela, OFM, Mexican Missionary to China and Author", *Franciscan Studies* VIII-3 (1948), pp. 250-274.
- Francis A. Rouleau, "The First Chinese Priest of the Society of Jesus: Emmanuel de Siquera, Cheng-Ma-No We-hsin 程瑪諾, 1633-1673", in: *Archivum Historicum Societatis Jesu* XXVIII (1959), pp. 3-50.
- idem* "Maillard de Tournon, Papal Legate at the Court of Peking - The First Imperial Audience (31 December 1705)", in: *Archivum Historicum Societatis Jesu* XXXI (1962), pp. 264-323.
- Roupu tuan* 人口團 (see Li Yu)
- Ruan Renze 阮仁澤 and Gao Zhenrong 高震農, *Shanghai zongjiaoshi* 上海宗教史 ( "A religious history of Shanghai"), Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe 上海人民出版社 1992.
- Murray A. Rubinstein, *The Origins of the Anglo-American Missionary Enterprise in China, 1807-1840*, Lanham / Maryland and London: Scarecrow Press 1996.
- Juan Ruiz-de-Medina (John Bridges, trans.), *The Catholic Church in Korea: its Origins 1566-1784*, Rome: Istituto Storico Societatis Iesu 1991.
- Paul. E. Rule, *K'ung-tzu or Confucius? The Jesuit Interpretation of Confucianism*, Sidney, London and Boston: Allen & Unwin 1986.
- idem* "Louis Fan Shou-I: A Missing Link in the Chinese Rites Controversy", in: *Actes du VIIe Colloque International de Sinologie de Chantilly*, Paris: Institut Ricci / Centre d'Études Chinoises 1995, pp. 277-294.
- idem* "History of Christianity in China in the Light of the Theology of Religions", unpublished paper for: *Symposium on the History of Christianity in China*, Hong Kong 2-4 October 1996.
- Thomas F. Ryan (and Tao Weiyl, transl.), *Yesuishi zai zhongguo* 耶穌在中國 ("Jesuits in China"), Hong Kong: Xianggang



- gongjiao zhenli xuehui (Catholic Truth Society of Hong Kong) 1965.
- Julian Saldanha, *Inculturation*, Mumbai: St Paul Publications 1987.
- Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message - The Missionary Impact on Culture*, Maryknoll / New York: Orbis Books 1989.
- Sanzijing* (see Wang Yinglin)
- Hubert Seiwert, "Hochkultur und fremde Religion: Buddhismus und Katholizismus in China", in: M. Pye and Renate Stegerhoff, *Religion in fremder Kultur*, pp. 55-76.
- idem* "Orthodoxie und Heterodoxie im lokalen Kontext Südchinas", in: Hans G. Kippenberg and Brigitte Luchesi (eds), *Lokale Religionsgeschichte*, Marburg: Diagonal Verlag 1995, pp. 145-155.
- Deborah Sommer, *Chinese Religion: An Anthology of Sources*, New York: Oxford University Press 1995.
- Klaus Schatz, "Inkulturation und Kontextualität in der Missionsgeschichte am Beispiel des Ritenstreits", in: *Inkulturation und Kontextualität - Festgabe für L. Bertsch*, Frankfurt (Main): J. Knecht 1994, pp. 17-36.
- Werner Schiffauer, "Migration and Religiousness", in: Th. Gerholm and Y. Georg Lithman (eds), *The New Islamic Presence*, pp. 146-158.
- Werner Schilling, *Das Heil in Rotchina? - Der 'Neue Mensch' im Maoismus*, Bad Liebenzell: Liebenzeller Missionsverlag / Telos 1975.
- Peter Schineller, "Inculturation: A Difficult and Delicate Task", in: *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, XX-3 (July 1996), pp. 109-112.
- Kristofer Marinus Schipper: "Sources of Modern Popular Worship in the Taoist Canon", in: *Proceedings of the "International Conference on Popular Beliefs and Chinese Culture" / Minjian xinyang yu zhongguo wenhua guoji yantaohui lunwenji*, Taipei: *Hanxue yanjiu zhongxin* 1994, vol. 1, pp. 1-23.
- Herman Schlyter, *Karl Gützlaff als Missionar in China*, Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup 1946.
- idem* *Der Chinamissionar Karl Gützlaff und seine Heimatbasis*, Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup 1976.
- Georg Schöllgen, "Die Teilnahme der Christen am städtischen Leben in vorkonstantinischer Zeit", in: Jochen Martin and Barbara Quint (eds), *Christentum und antike Gesellschaft*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 1990, pp. 319-357.
- Gregory Schopen, "Filial Piety and the Monk in the Practice of Indian Buddhism: A Question of 'Sinicization' Viewed from the Other Side", in: *T'oung Pao* LXX (1984), pp. 110-126.
- Josef Franz Schütte and John J. Coyne (trans.), *Valignano's Mission Principles for Japan*, Volume I: *From his Appointment as Visitor until his first Departure from Japan*, Part I: *The Problem (1573-1580)*; Part II, *The Solution (1580-1582)*, St Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources 1980.
- Meir Shahar, *Crazy Ji - Chinese Religion and Popular Literature*, Cambridge / Massachusetts: Harvard University Press 1998.
- Sidney Shapiro, *Jews in Old China - Studies by Chinese Scholars*, New York: Hippocrene Books 1984.

- Yu-Ming Shaw, *An American Missionary in China: John Leighton Stuart and Chinese-American Relations*, Cambridge / Massachusetts: Council on East Asian Studies (Harvard University) and Harvard University Press 1992.
- Richard Hon-Chun Shek, “Religion and Society in Late Ming: Sectarianism and Popular Thought in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century China”, PhD thesis: University of California 1980.
- idem* “Millenarianism without Rebellion: The Huangtian Dao in North China”, in: *Modern China* VIII-3 (July 1982), pp. 305-336.
- Shijing* 聖經 (see Bernard Karlgren)
- Shen Shiwei, “Shanghai’s Old Church”, in: *Tripod* (Ding 鼎), 8/1995, pp. 45-56.
- Vincent Y. C. Shih, *The Taiping Ideology: Its Sources, Interpretations and Influences*, Seattle: University of Washington Press 1967.
- A. Shorter, *Towards a Theory of Inculturation*, London: Geoffrey Chapman 1988.
- Renée Simon (ed.), *Le P. Antoine Gaubil, S.J.: Correspondence de Pékin 1722-1759*, Geneva: Droz 1970.
- Gunnar Sjöholm (ed.), *Readings in Mo Ti, Chapters XXVI-XXVIII: On the Will of Heaven*, Helsingborg: Plus Ultra 1982.
- G. William Skinner, “Mobility Strategies in Late Imperial China: A Regional Systems Analysis”, in: Carol A. Smith, *Regional Analysis*, New York, San Francisco and London: Academic Press 1976, volume 1: *Economic Systems*, pp. 327-364.
- idem* and Mark Elvin, *The City in Late Imperial China*, Stanford: Stanford University Press 1977.
- Richard Joseph Smith, “Ritual in Ch’ing Culture”, in: Liu Kwang-Ching (ed.), *Orthodoxy in Late Imperial China*, pp. 281-310.
- idem* *Fortune Tellers and Philosophers: Divination in Traditional Chinese Society*, Boulder and London: Westview Press 1992.
- Thomas Spear and Isaria Kimambo, *East African Expressions of Christianity*, Athens / Ohio: Ohio University Press 1999.
- Jonathan Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci*, New York: Viking 1984.
- idem* *The Question of Hu*, London: Faber 1988.
- idem* *God’s Chinese Son - The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom of Hong Xiuquan*, New York: Norton 1996.
- Nicolas Standaert (Zhong Mingdan 鍾鳴旦), *Yang Tingyun - Confucian and Christian in Late Ming China: His Life and Thought*, Cologne, Copenhagen, Leiden, New York: E. J. Brill 1988.
- idem* “Inculturation and Chinese-Christian Contacts in late Ming and early Qing”, in: *Ching Feng* XXXIV-4 (December 1991), pp. 209-227.
- idem* “Chinese Christian Visits to the Underworld”, in: L. Blussé and H. T. Zurndorfer (eds), *Conflict and Accommodation*, pp. 54-70.
- idem* *The Fascinating God*, Rome: Pontifica Universitas Gregoriana 1995.
- idem* “New Trends in the Historiography of Christianity in China” in: *The Catholic Historical Review*, LXXXIII-4 (Winter 1997): “Christianity in China”, pp. 569-613.
- idem* and Adrianus Dudink, Huang Yi-lung 黃宜龍, Zhu Pingyi 朱平儀 et al., *Xujiahui cangshulou mingqing tianzhujiao wenxian* 徐家匯藏書樓明清天主敎文獻 (“Christian

- documents from the Ming and Qing periods of the Xujiahui Library”), Taipei: *Furen daxue chubanshe* 1996.
- Milton Theobald Stauffer, *The Christian Occupation of China - General Survey of the Numerical Strength and Geographical Distribution of the Christian Forces in China, 1918-1921*, Shanghai: China Continuation Committee 1922 [reprinted in Taipei: CMC 1979].
- M. Steichen, *The Christian Daimyos: A Century of Religious and Political History in Japan (1549-1650)*, Tokyo: Rikkyo Gakuin Press [1903].
- Ethel Stefana Stevens, *The Mandaean of Iraq and Iran: Their Cults, Customs, Magic, Legends and Folklore*, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1937.
- Charles Stewart and Rosalind Shaw (eds), *Syncretism and Antisyncretism - The Politics of Religious Synthesis*, London: Routledge 1994.
- David Strand, *Rickshaw Beijing - City, People and Politics in the 1920s*, Berkeley: University of California Press 1989.
- E-tu Zen Sun, *Ch'ing Administrative Terms: A Translation of the Terminology of the Six Boards with Explanatory Notes*, Cambridge / Massachusetts: Harvard University Press 1961.
- Sun Li, “Christianity from the Viewpoint of Young Christians: the Example of Shanghai”, in Ph. Wickeri and L. Cole (eds), *Christianity and Chinese Modernization*, pp. 79-89.
- Sun Shangyang, *Mingmo tianzhujiao yu ruxue de jiaoliu he chongtu* (“Contact and Conflict between Catholicism and Confucianism at the end of the Ming period”), Taipei: *Wenjin chubanshe* 1992.
- Theo Sundermeier, *The Individual and Community in African Traditional Religions*, Hamburg: LIT Verlag 1998.
- Bengt G. M. Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*, London: Lutterworth Press 1948.
- D. Sure and R. Noll, *100 Roman Documents concerning the Chinese Rites Controversy (1645-1941)*, San Francisco: Ricci Institute / University of San Francisco 1992.
- Allen J. Swanson and Grace Lo, *The Church in Taiwan: Profile 1980 - A Review of the Past, A Projection for the Future*, Pasadena: William Carey Library 1981.
- Adolfo Tamburello, “Partenze e arrivi degli alunni del Collegio de’ Cinesi di Napoli nell’anno 1785 - Dalla corrispondenza di Emiliano Palladini con Propaganda Fide nell’interim del suo rettorato del Collegio (maggio 1785-marzo 1786)”, in: F. D’Arelli and A. Tamburello, *La Missione Cattolica in Cina*, pp. 273-281.
- Edmond Tang, “East Asia: The Politics of Inculturation”, in: *PMV Bulletin CIV-1* (1986), pp. 1-51.
- Tchang Fou-jouei (transl. and ed.), *Initiation à la langue classique chinoise à partir de trois chapitres les plus représentatifs du Hanfeizi*, Paris: Librairie You-Feng 1987.
- idem* (transl. and ed.), *Initiation à la langue classique chinoise à partir d'extraits du Zhuangzi*, Paris: Librairie You-Feng 1989.
- Barend J. ter Haar, *The White Lotus Teachings in Chinese Religious History*, Leiden: E. J. Brill 1992.

- idem* *Ritual and Mythology of the Chinese Triads: Creating an Identity*, Leiden and Boston: E. J. Brill 1992.
- J. Thornton, "The Development of an African Catholic Church in the Kingdom of Kongo, 1491-1750", in: *Journal of African History*, XXV-2 (1984), pp. 147-167.
- Rolf Gerhard Tiedemann, "The Persistence of Banditry: Incidents in Border Districts of the North China Plain", in: *Modern China* VIII-3 (July 1982), pp. 395-433.
- idem* "Rural Unrest in North China, 1868-1900: With Particular Reference to South Shandong", PhD thesis: University of London 1991.
- idem* "Christianity and Chinese 'Heterodox Sects': Mass Conversion and Syncretism in Shandong Province in the Early Eighteenth Century": in *Monumenta Serica* XLIV (1996), pp. 339-382.
- idem* "From Target to Safe Haven: The Changing Role of Christian Missionaries in Shandong, China, 1860-1945", unpublished paper for: *Symposium on the History of Christianity in China*, Hong Kong 2-4 October 1996.
- idem* "China and its Neighbours", in: Adrian Hastings (ed.), *A World History of Christianity*, London: Cassell 1999, pp. 369-415.
- T'ien Ju-kang, *Peaks of Faith: Protestant Mission in Revolutionary China*, Leiden: E. J. Brill 1993.
- S. L. Tikhvinski, *La domination mandchoue en Chine*, Moscow: Edition du Progrès 1982.
- Walter Curt Till, *Koptische Heiligen- und Märtyrerlegenden: Texte, Übersetzungen und Indices*, Rome: Pont. Inst. Orientalium Studiorum 1935/36.
- K. H. Ting, "The Chinese Christians' Approach to the Bible", in: *China Notes* XXIX-2/3 (1991), pp. 623-628.
- Eugène Tisserant, *Eastern Christianity in India: A History of the Syro-Malabar Church from the Earliest Time to the Present Day*, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras: Orient Longmans 1957.
- John Tong, "The Church from 1949 to 1990", in J.-P. Wiest and E. Tang (eds), *The History of the Catholic Church in China*, Maryknoll / New York: Orbis Books 1994, pp. 7-27.
- Marjorie Topley, "Chinese Religion and Rural Cohesion in the Nineteenth Century", in: *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* VIII (1968), pp. 9-43.
- Tseng-Tsai Wang, "The Macartney Mission: A Bicentenary Review", in: R. Bickers (ed.), *Diplomacy and Ritual*, pp. 43-56.
- Tsien Tsui-hsien, in Joseph Needham (ed.), *Science and Civilisation in China*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1985, volume V, part 1: "Paper and Printing".
- Tsuchiya Yoshimasa, "Towards Inculturation: Theology of Language and Culture", in: *The Japan Missionary Bulletin* XLIV-4 (1990), pp. 235-248.
- Stephen Turnbull, *Devotion to Mary among the Hidden Christians of Japan*, Wallington / England: The Ecumenical Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary 1993.
- idem* *The Kakure Kirishitan of Japan - A Study of Their Development, Beliefs and Rituals to the Present Day*, Richmond: Japan Library / Curzon Press 1998.

- Thomas A. Tweed, *The American Encounter with Buddhism 1844-1912 - Victorian Culture and the Limits of Dissent*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1992.
- E. E. Uzokwu, *The Church and Inculturation: The acculturation of Roman Catholicism in Eastern Nigeria*, Uruowulu / Obosi: Pacific College Press 1985.
- Luigi Vannicelli, *La famiglia cinese: studio etnologico*, Milan: Società Editrice "Vita e Pensiero" 1943.
- Paul A. Varg, *Missionaries, Chinese and Diplomats: The American Protestant Missionary Movement, 1890-1952*, Princeton: Princeton University Press 1958.
- Hubert Verhaeren, *L'ancienne bibliothèque du P'é-t'ang*, Beijing: Imprimerie des Lazaristes 1940.
- Paul Veyne, *Le pain et le cirque: sociologie historique d'un pluralisme politique*, Paris: Seuil 1976.
- idem* "La religion gréco-romain: Le sacré et le profane", in: *Annales (Histoire, Sciences Sociales)* LV-1 (January 2000), pp. 3-42.
- Pieter Hendrick Vrijhof and Jacques Waadenburg, *Official and Popular Religion - Analysis of a Theme for Religious Studies*, The Hague: Houton 1979.
- Rudolf G. Wagner, *Reenacting the Heavenly Vision - the Role of Religion in the Taiping Rebellion*, Berkeley: University of California Press 1982.
- idem* "Reading the Chairman Mao Memorial Hall: The Tribulations of the Implied Pilgrim", in: S. Naquin and C.-F. Yü (eds), *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites*, pp. 378-423.
- Frederic Wakeman, *Strangers at the Gate: Social Disorder in South China, 1839-1892*, Berkeley: University of California Press 1966
- idem* and Carolyn Grant (eds), *Conflict and Control in Late Imperial China*, Berkeley: University of California Press 1975.
- idem* *The Great Enterprise - The Manchu Restoration of Imperial Order in Seventeenth-Century China*, Berkeley: University of California Press 1985.
- Arthur Waley, *Yuan Mei: Eighteenth Century Chinese Poet*, London: George Allen and Unwin 1956.
- Joanna Waley-Cohen, *Exile in Mid-Qing China: Banishment to Xinjiang, 1758-1820*, New Haven: Yale University Press 1991.
- Norman Walling (Wan Limin 万林明), "The Catholic Church in Shanghai - Yesterday and Today"/ "Shanghai tianzhujiao jinxing", in: *Tripod / Ding* 8/1995, pp. 33-44.
- Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History - Studies in the Transmission of Faith*, Maryknoll / New York: Orbis Books 1996.
- idem* "African Christianity in the History of Religions", in Christopher Fyfe and Andrew Walls (eds), *Christianity in Africa in the 1990s*, Edinburgh: Centre of Asian Studies 1996, pp. 1-16.
- Hartmut Walravens, *China Illustrata - Das europäische Chinaverständnis im Spiegel des sechzehnten bis achtzehnten Jahrhunderts*, Weinheim: VCH 1987.
- Jiangping Wang, *Concord and Conflict - The Hui Communities of Yunnan Society in a Historical Perspective*, Lund: Lund University Press 1996.
- Wang Meixiu 王玫秀, "Xifang de zhongguo jidujiao yanjiu" ("Western research on Chinese

- Christianity”), in: *Shijie zongjiao yanjiu* 世界宗教研究, 4/1995, pp. 132-139.
- Wang Minglun 王明伦, *Fanyangjiaoshu zhi jietianxuan* 反杨家塾志节天选 (“Educational Selection of anti-Christian book titles”), Jinan: *Ji-Lu shushe* 齐鲁书社 1984.
- Wang Qingcheng 王庆成, *Tianfu tianxiong shengzhi* 天府天熊圣旨 (“Sacred edicts by the Celestial Father and Celestial Brothers”), Liaoning: *renmin chubanshe* 人民出版社 1986.
- Xiaochao Wang, *Christianity and Imperial Culture: Chinese Christian Apologetics in the Seventeenth Century and their Latin Patristic Equivalent*, Leiden, Boston and Cologne: E. J. Brill 1998.
- Wang Yinglin 王应麟 (1223-1296), *Sanzijing* (“Three character classic”) 三经.
- Wang Zhichun 王直纯 (Zhao Chunchen 赵春辰, ed.), *Qingchao rou yuan ji* 清朝柔远记 “Records of hospitality towards strangers in the Qing dynasty”, 1891 [reprinted Beijing: *Zhonghua shuju* 中华书局 1989].
- Benedicta Ward and G. R. Evans, “The Medieval West”, in: Adrian Hastings (ed.), *A World History of Christianity*, London: Cassell 1999, pp. 110-146.
- Burton Watson, (transl.), *Mo-Tzu - Basic Writings*, New York and London: Columbia University Press 1963.
- James L. Watson, “The Structure of Chinese Funerary Rites: Elementary Forms, Ritual Sequence, and the Primacy of Performance”, in: J. Watson and E. Rawski (eds), in: *Death Ritual*, pp. 3-19.
- idem* “Funeral Specialists in Cantonese Society: Pollution, Performance and Social Hierarchy”, in: J. Watson and E. Rawski (eds), *Death Ritual*, pp. 109-134.
- idem* and Evelyn S. Rawski (eds), *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China*, Berkeley: University of California Press 1988.
- Rubie S. Watson, “Remembering the Dead: Graves and Politics in Southeastern China”, in: J. Watson and E. Rawski (eds), *Death Ritual*, pp. 203-227.
- John R. Watt, *The District Magistrate in Late Imperial China*, New York and London: Columbia University Press 1972.
- Robert P. Weller, *Unities and Diversities in Chinese Religion*, Basingstoke / London: MacMillan 1987.
- Christal Whelan, “Written and Unwritten Texts of the *Kakure Kirishitan*”, in John Breen and Mark Williams (eds), *Japan and Christianity - Impacts and Responses*, Basingstoke / England: Macmillan 1996, pp. 122-137.
- James Whitehead, Yu-Ming Shaw and N. J. Girardot (eds), *China and Christianity - Historical and Future Encounters*, Notre Dame / Indiana: Notre Dame University Press 1979.
- Bob Whyte, *Unfinished Encounter: China and Christianity*, London: Collins 1988.
- Philip Wickeri, “Christianity and the Origins of the Taiping Movement: A New Study of the Social Function of Religious Symbols”, in: *Ching Feng* XIX-1 (1976), pp. 5-34.
- idem* and Lois Cole (eds), *Christianity and Modernization: A Chinese Debate*, Hong Kong: DAGA Press 1995.

- Jean-Paul Wiest (ed.), *Maryknoll in China*, Armonk: M. E. Sharpe 1988.
- idem* “Learning from the Missionary Past”, in J.-P. Wiest and E. Tang (eds), *The Catholic Church in Modern China*, pp. 186-189.
- idem* and Edmond Tang (eds), *The Catholic Church in Modern China - Perspectives*, Maryknoll / New York: Orbis Books 1993.
- idem* *The History of the Catholic Church in China*, Maryknoll / New York: Orbis Books 1994.
- Pierre-Etienne Will, *Bureaucratie et famine en Chine au 18e siècle*, Paris: Mouton 1980.
- Bernward H. Willeke, *Imperial Government and Catholic Missions in China during the Years 1784-1789*, St Bonaventure / New York: Franciscan Institute 1948.
- idem* “Das Werden der chinesischen katholischen Bibel”, in: *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft* XVI (1960), pp. 281-295.
- idem* “The Report of the Apostolic Visitation of D. Emmanuele Conforti on the Franciscan Missions in Shansi, Shensi and Kansu (1798)”, in: *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* LXXXIV-1/2 (1991), pp. 198-271.
- idem* “D. Jacobus Li Zubiao (1760-1828): a memorable Chinese Priest and Missionary in Shansi - His Life and his Letters and other pertinent Documents”, unpublished article, Osnabrück 1996.
- C. P. William, *The Ideal of the Self-Governing Church - A Study of Victorian Missionary Strategy*, Leiden, Boston and Cologne: E. J. Brill 1990.
- E. T. Williams, “The State Religion of China during the Manchu Dynasty”, in: *Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, (new series) XLIV (1913), pp. 11-45.
- John W. Witek, *Manchu Christians in Early Eighteenth-Century China: A Preliminary Study*, Taipei: Ricci Institute for Chinese Studies 1993.
- idem* *Ferdinand Verbiest (1623-1688): Jesuit Missionary, Scientist, Engineer and Diplomat*, Nettetal: Steyler Verlag 1995.
- Arthur P. Wolf, *Religion and Ritual in Chinese Society*, Stanford: Stanford University Press 1974.
- Aymro Wondmagegnehu and Joachim Motovu, *The Ethiopian Orthodox Church*, Addis Ababa: Ethiopian Orthodox Mission 1970.
- Frances Wood, *Chinese Illustration*, London: British Library 1985.
- Wu Pei-yi 卞 卞 卞 卞 卞, “Self-Examination and the Confession of Sins in Traditional China”, in: *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* XXXIX-1 (June 1979), pp. 5-38.
- Silas H. L. Wu, *K'ang-hsi and his Heir Apparent, 1661-1722*, Cambridge / Massachusetts: Harvard University Press 1971.
- Wu Xiangxiang 卞 卞 卞 卞 卞, *Tianzhujiao dongchuan wenxian* 卞 卞 卞 卞 卞 卞 卞 卞 卞 卞 卞 卞 卞 卞 卞 卞 (“Documents concerning the transmission of Christianity to the East”), Taipei: *Taiwan xuesheng chubanshe* 卞 卞 卞 卞 卞 卞 卞 卞 卞 卞 卞 卞 卞 卞 卞 卞 1958.
- Xiyouji* (see W. J. F. Jenner)
- Xing Fuzeng 卞 卞 卞 卞 卞, *Wenhua sheying yu zhongguo jidujiaotu* 卞 卞 卞 卞 卞 卞 卞 卞 卞 卞 卞 卞 卞 卞 卞 卞 (“Cultural adaptation and Chinese Christianity”), Hong Kong: *Jiandao shenxueyuan*

- 中国圣经神学院 (Alliance Bible Seminary) / Xuandao  
 chubanshe 中国圣经神学院 (China Alliance Press) 1995.  
Xu Hualong 许华龙, *Zhongguo guiwenhua dacidian*  
 中国鬼神文化大辞典 (“A complete dictionary of China’s  
 ghost culture”), *Guangxi minzu chubanshe*  
 广西民族出版社 1994.  
Xu Jilin 许继林 “Bentuhua de lijie wuqu” (English  
 parallel title: “Some Responses to the Radical Thinking of  
 Indigenization in Social Research”), in: *Xianggang shehui kexue xuebao*  
 香港社会科学季刊 *Hong Kong Journal of Social Sciences*,  
 4/1994, pp. 184-193.  
Xu Zhonglin 许宗林, *Fengshen yanyi*, Shanghai: *Shanghai guji*  
*chubanshe* 上海古籍出版社 1991.  
Xu Zongze 许宗泽, *Zhongguo tianzhujiao chuanjiaoshi gailun*  
 中国基督教传教史概论 (“An outline history of Christian  
 missions in China”), Shanghai: *Shanghai shudian* 上海书店  
 1992 [first published 1938].  
Ya Hanzhang 亚含章 and Wang Yousan 王佑珊: *Zhongguo wushenlun shi*  
 中国无神论史 (“A history of atheism in China”) Beijing:  
*Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan chubanshe*  
 中国社会科学出版社 1992.  
 Ching K'un Yang, *Religion within Chinese Society: A Study of Contemporary Social*  
*Functions of Religion and some of their Historical Factors*, Berkeley:  
 University of California Press and Cambridge: Cambridge UP 1967.  
Yang Zhengguang 杨正光, *Zhongguo zuihou de yige dataijian*  
 中国最后的太监 (“China’s last grand eunuch”),  
 [Changsha]: *Qunzhong chubanshe* 群中出版社 1994.  
Yip Ka-che, *The Anti-Christian Movements of 1920-27: With Special Reference to the*  
*Experience of Protestant Missions*, New York: Columbia University  
 Press 1970.  
 John D. Young, *Confucianism and Christianity - the First Encounter*, Hong Kong:  
 Hong Kong University Press 1983.  
 Chü-fang Yü, “P’u-t’o Shan: Pilgrimage and the Creation of the Chinese Potalaka”,  
 in: S. Naquin and C.-F. Yü (eds), *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites*,  
 pp. 293-332.  
Yü Ying-shi 余英时, “O Soul, Come Back! A Study in the Changing  
 Conceptions of the Soul and the Afterlife in Pre-Buddhist China”, in:  
*Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, XLVII- 2 (December 1987),  
 pp. 363-395.  
 Jost O. Zetsche, *The Bible in China: History of the Union Version or The Culmination*  
*of Protestant Missionary Bible Translation in China*, Sankt Augustin:  
 Steyler Verlag 1999.  
Zhang Dainian 张dainian *Kongzi dacidian* (“A complete  
 dictionary of Confucianism”), Shanghai: *Shanghai cishuju*  
 上海辞书出版社 1994.  
Zhang Hao 张浩, *Youan yishi yu minzhu chuantong*  
 元意识与民主传统 (“The Awareness of Darkness and  
 Democratic Tradition”), Taipei: *Lianjing chubanshe*  
 联经出版社 1989.



Zhang Li 张立 and Liu Jiantang 刘建堂, *Zhongguo jiaoanshi* 中国教案史 (“A history of religious court cases in China”), Chengdu: *Sichuan shehui-kexueyuan* 四川社会科学院 1987.

Zhang Mingxi 张明熙 *Shenmi de mingyun mimu* 神秘之命运谜 (“The Mystery of secret symbols for soothsaying”), *Shanghai sanlian shudian* 三联书店 1995.

Zhang Qinshi 张钦士, “Guonei jin shi nian lai zhi zongjiao sichao” 国内近十年来之宗教思潮 (“Movements in religious thought in China within the last ten years”), in: *Yanjing huawen xuexiao yan-ke cankao cailiao* 燕京华文学校参考资料, Beijing 1927.

Zhang Shunhong, “Historical Anachronism: The Qing Court’s Perception and the Reaction to the Macartney Embassy”, in R. Bickers (ed.), *Ritual and Diplomacy*, pp. 31-42.

Zhang Tingyu 张廷玉 et al., *Ming shi* 明史 (“A History of the Ming”), Beijing: *Zhonghua shuju* 中华书局 1974, volume (ce 册) 21, juan 6493-6494, “Xu guangqi zhuan” 徐光启传 (“A biography of Xu Guangqi”).

Zhang Yan 张彦, *Qingdai zutian yu jiceng shehui jiegou* 清代宗团与基层社会结构 (“The Banner fields and the structure of grassroots society during the Qing period”), Beijing: *Renmin daxue chubanshe* 人民大学出版社 1991.

Zhang Ze 张泽, *Qingdai jinjiaoqi de tianzhujiao* 清代禁教期的天主教 (“Christianity during the Qing prohibition”) Taipei: *Guangqi chubanshe* 光启出版社 1992.

Zhao Yi 赵翼, *Ershiershi zhaji* 二十二史劄记 (“Printed annotations to the Twenty-two Histories”) 1799 [Taipei: *Shixue chubanshe* 世学出版社 1974].

Zhao Qingyuan 赵清元 *Zhongguo tianzhujiao jiaoqu huafen jiqi shouzhang jieti nianbiao* 中国天主教会教区划分及其首任主教继任年表 (“Annual compendium of China’s Catholic dioceses and their leaders”), Tainan: *Wen-dao chubanshe* 文道出版社 1980.

Zhao Zhongming 赵宗明, *Wushi, wushu, mijing - zhongguo wushu wenhua zhuiyong* 巫史, 巫术, 易经 - 中国巫术文化追源 (“Shamans, sorcery, forbidden spaces - Traces of China’s culture of sorcery”), Kunming: *Yunnan daxue chubanshe* 云南大学出版社 1993.

Zhong Shuhe 钟舒和 (ed.), *Zou xiang shijie congshu* 走向世界丛书, Changsha: *Yuelu chubanshe* 岳麓出版社 1985.

Zhou Xun 周迅, *Chinese Perceptions of the ‘Jews’ and Judaism: A History of the Youtai*, Richmond: Curzon Press 2000.

Zhou Yumin 周玉敏 and Shao Yong 邵雍 *Zhongguo huibang shi* 中国会党史 (“History of China’s brotherhoods and societies”), Shanghai: *Shanghai renmin chubanshe* 上海人民出版社 1993.

Zhu Tianshun 朱天舜, *Zhongguo gudai zongjiao chutan* 中国古代宗教初探 (“A preliminary study of ancient Chinese

- religion”), Shanghai: *Shanghai renmin chubanshe*  
 □□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□ 1982.
- Zhu Ying □□□□, “Ming-qingshi yanjiu de xin quxiang”  
 □□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□ (“New tendencies in Ming and  
 Qing research”), in: *Jindaishi yanjiu* □□ □□□□□□□□, 1/1996, pp. 104-  
 119.
- Zhuangzi □□□□ (see Tchang Fou-Jouei)
- Zhuo Xinpin “The Concept of Original Sin in the Cultural Encounter between East  
 and West”, in: Philip Wickeri and Lois Cole, *Christianity and  
 Modernization*, pp. 91-101.
- Angela Zito, *Of Body and Brush: Grand Sacrifice as Text / Performance in  
 Eighteenth Century China*, Chicago: University of California Press  
 1997.
- Erik Zürcher *The Buddhist Conquest of China - the Spread and Adaptation of  
 Buddhism in Early Mediaeval China*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1959.
- idem* *Syllabus “Boedhisme in China: adaptatie en reactie”*, Leiden:  
 Sinologisch Instituut 1978.
- idem* “The Lord of Heaven and the Demons - Strange Stories from a Late  
 Ming Christian Manuscript”, in: G. Naundorf et al., *Religion und  
 Philosophie in Ostasien - Festschrift für Hans Steiniger zum 65.  
 Geburtstag*, Würzburg 1985, pp. 357 - 376.
- idem* *Bouddhisme, christianisme et société chinoise*, Paris: Juillard 1990.
- idem* “The Jesuit Mission in Fujian in Late Ming Times: Levels of  
 Response”, in: E.B. Vermeer (ed.), *Development and Decline of Fukien  
 Province in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, Leiden: E. J.  
 Brill 1990, pp. 417-457.
- idem* “A Complement to Confucianism: Christianity and Orthodoxy in Late  
 Ming China”, in: Huang Chun-chieh and Erik Zürcher (eds), *Norms  
 and the State in China*, Leiden: E. J. Brill 1993, pp. 71 - 92.
- idem* “Jesuit Accommodation and the Chinese Cultural Imperative”, in:  
 David E. Mungello, *The Chinese Rites Controversy - Its History and  
 Meaning*, Nettetal: Steyler Verlag 1994, pp. 71-92.
- idem* “From ‘Jesuit Studies’ to ‘Western Learning’”, in: John Cayley and  
 Ming Wilson (eds), *Europe Studies China - Papers from an  
 International Conference on the History of European Sinology*,  
 London: Han-Shan Tang 1995, pp. 264-279.
- idem* “Confucian and Christian Philosophy in Late Ming China”,  
 unpublished paper for: *Symposium on the History of Christianity in  
 China*, Hong Kong 2-4 October 1996.
- idem*, Nicolas Standaert and Adrianus Dudink, *Bibliography of the Jesuit Mission in  
 China (ca. 1580 - ca. 1680)*, Leiden: Centre of Non-Western Studies  
 Leiden University 1991.